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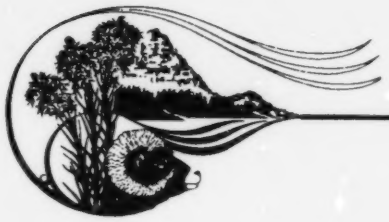

WATERTON LAKES
National Park

PLAN CONCEPT

Canada

September 1990

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE WATERTON LAKES PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

The first Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan was approved in 1978. Since that time, much has changed - in terms of Canadian Parks Service policies, regional development and relationships, park visitation, our understanding of the park's heritage resources, and planning processes. Formal Park Management Plan reviews are normally undertaken every five years, and a review of the 1978 plan is long overdue. As a result, the final outcome of the current Plan Review will be a new Park Management Plan.

The revised Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan will guide the protection, use, management and development of the park over the next 15 years. The direction contained in the Park Management Plan must be consistent with the National Parks Act (revised 1988) and Canadian Parks Service Policy. Information on park resources, the people who use the parks, and regional concerns were important considerations during the Plan Review.

Previous products in the Plan Review process (see Figure 1) include a newsletter to introduce the Plan Review to interested members of the public and a draft Park Purpose and Objectives Statement. The Purpose and Objectives Statement has been revised to incorporate public comments and the final version can be found in section 3 of the Plan Concept. A report entitled Background Information - Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan Review was also produced. This report summarized available park and regional information, as well as planning concerns. It contains important information for public review of the Plan Concept.

The Plan Concept is a critical product in the development of the new Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan. The Plan Concept sets forth a vision for the future of Waterton Lakes National Park (see Section 4.2), as well as numerous objectives and proposed actions for achieving that vision. Objectives and plan proposals are provided for: resource protection and management (Section 5); enhancing the park experience and managing visitor impacts (Section 6); Canadian Parks Service support facilities (Section 9); and regional integration (Section 10). In some instances, optional means of achieving an objective are presented for public comment. Proposals regarding the role, size limits, density, form and character of the community of Waterton Park are presented in the Community Concept (Section 7). The Community Concept sets the framework for a revised Community Plan, to be produced in 1991. Proposed roles and objectives for major frontcountry areas are provided in Section 8 of the Plan Concept, and a summary of the environmental and socio-economic impacts of plan proposals can be found in Section 11.

Following public review of the Plan Concept, the final Park Management Plan will be developed and presented to the Federal Minister of the Environment for approval.

Planning is a dynamic process. Situations change and new information becomes available which may render some aspects of a plan obsolete. Five year reviews of park management plans are now a legislated requirement. These reviews will enable the Canadian Parks Service to adjust plans to accommodate new information, changing visitation trends, regional developments and/or public perceptions. Public consultation is a prerequisite to any major adjustments to the Park Management Plan.

1.2 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation has been an important consideration throughout the Plan Review. Interested members of the public were consulted at two stages prior to the development of the Plan Concept (see Figure 1). First, the public was asked to provide written comments on the draft Park Purpose and Objectives Statement in June 1989. Next, the public was asked to provide comments on the information and planning concerns contained in Background Information - Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan Review. A public workshop was held in Lethbridge to discuss planning concerns as well as to solicit potential solutions to these concerns. As a result of these initiatives, the planning team gained an understanding of public sentiment about the park prior to developing the Plan Concept.

A summary of the Plan Concept is being mailed to the approximately 1400 people on the mailing list for the Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan Review. Public open houses will be held to discuss the Plan Concept in October, 1990 in Waterton Park, Pincher Creek, Cardston, Lethbridge and Calgary.

The public comments received on the Plan Concept will be an important factor in the development of the final Park Management Plan. Other considerations will include the Canadian Park Service's assessment of environmental and socio-economic impacts of the Plan Concept and consultations with specific groups upon request.

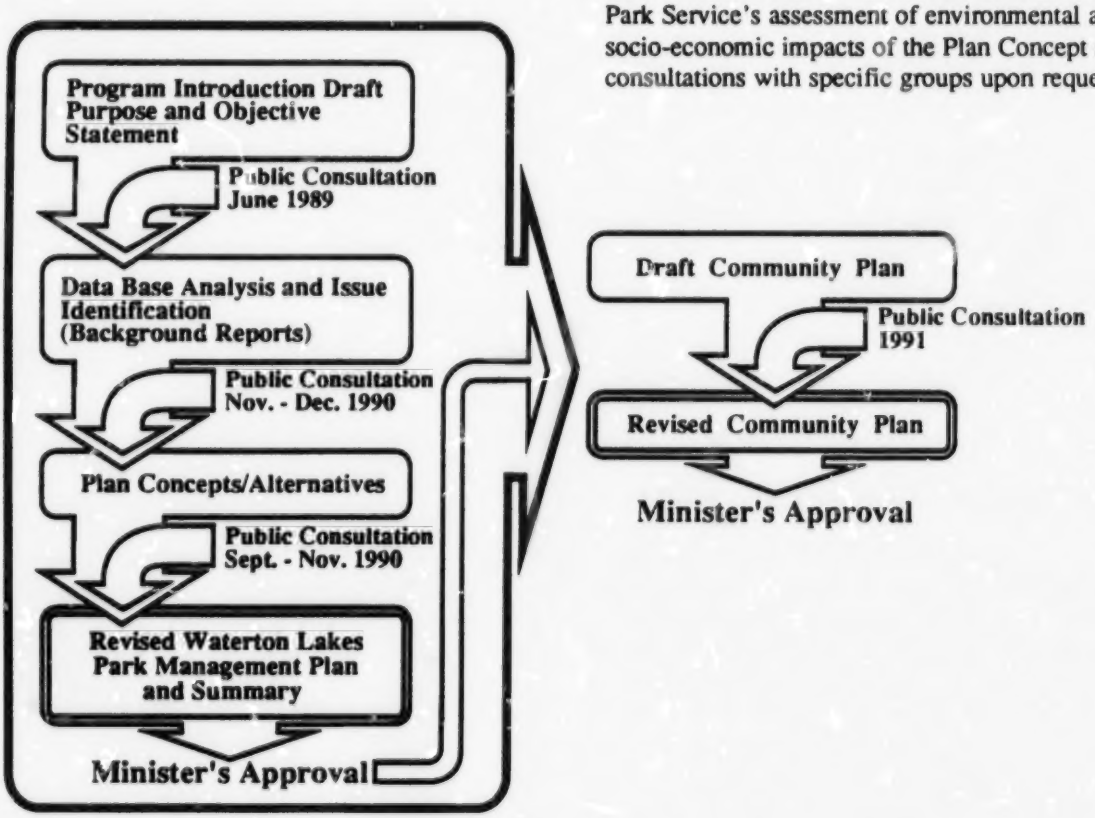
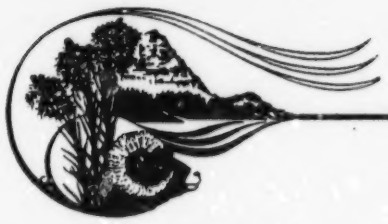

Program Introduction Draft Purpose and Objective Statement
Public Consultation June 1989
Data Base Analysis and Issue Identification (Background Reports)
Public Consultation Nov. - Dec. 1990
Plan Concepts/Alternatives
Public Consultation Sept. - Nov. 1990
Revised Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan and Summary
Minister's Approval
Draft Community Plan
Public Consultation 1991
Revised Community Plan
Minister's Approval

Figure 1. The Management Planning Program



2.0 FUTURE TRENDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of park planning is to look toward the future and establish direction that will put us in a proactive position to solve tomorrow's problems. An examination of future trends is therefore a critical component of park management planning.

A thorough trends analysis carried out under contract to the Canadian Parks Service, Western Region indicates that a number of trends are likely to have important implications for national parks in Alberta and British Columbia, and more specifically for Waterton Lakes National Park. The following is a discussion of the most relevant demographic, tourism, recreation, economic and technological trends on which this Plan Concept is based. Important implications for Waterton Lakes National Park are discussed briefly, and responses to these trends are provided throughout the Plan Concept.

2.2 KEY TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

* Parks are increasingly becoming islands as more development takes place outside their boundaries. This points to the need to take a strong regional perspective in park planning and management, as well as maintaining parks' integrity as protected natural areas and ecological benchmarks.

* Increased environmental awareness has created a demand for seeing untouched environments and enhanced support for environmental protection. Waterton Lakes and other national parks will have an enhanced societal role to play as stewardship models and environmental educators.

* Canada's population is expected to grow slowly, as will Alberta's, and will stabilize early in the 21st century. The potential Canadian market for Waterton Lakes National Parks will not, therefore, grow significantly in size. A large proportion of the increase in our population will be due to immigration. Ensuring our national parks and the values they represent are relevant to these new Canadians will be an important challenge.

* On the average, Canada's population is getting older. The median age of Canadians in 2000 will be 41 years of age. On the whole, older people seek more controlled, secure and comfortable experiences, although they are very diverse in their needs and desires. Today's seniors are healthier and more affluent than they have been in the past.

* The 35-49 year old segment of the population will grow four times as fast as the general population in the 1990s. This group is generally highly educated and well travelled - they demand high quality park experiences. A greater emphasis must be placed on factors such as safety, type of accommodation, hospitality and quality service to meet the needs of this group.

* In the baby boom generation, leisure is the norm and the traditional drop-off in recreational activities with age will probably no longer hold true. In addition, many baby boomers are now having families. Demand for family-oriented opportunities is increasing.

* Tourists no longer just want to see things, they want fun, excitement and the ability to feel the culture and atmosphere of the places they visit. People are also looking for places that have "lots to do".

* People are carefully planning and making the most use of their limited leisure time. More dual income families points to the increasing importance of convenience to Canadian vacationers. Families are increasingly taking frequent, 3 or 4 day trips closer to home, rather than the traditional 2 or 3 week vacation. The regional market will, therefore, continue to be important to Waterton Lakes National Park.

* Ecotourism is expected to grow in volume and diversity. Wildlife viewing has become a very specialized and growing tourism activity. With its outstanding natural scenery and abundant visible wildlife, Waterton Lake National Park is a prime candidate for growth in ecotourism.

* Education levels have been rising steadily for many years, and consequently people look for recreational activities that contain an educational or cultural element (e.g. interpretive centres, theatres, historic sites).

* Tourism, already the world's largest industry, is expected to grow at a rate of approximately 4% annually to the year 2000. National parks will continue to be expected to play a key role. Waterton Lakes National Park must, therefore, clearly establish its unique position with respect to tourism and work with tourism partners to ensure that this position is maintained. Park programs and facilities must be designed for and targeted to specific market segments.

* Other relevant tourism trends include the following:

  - motorcoach tours are growing and the majority of users are seniors.

  - health tourism is gaining attention in North America.

  - luxury travel is increasing, especially for the mature market.

  - while adventure travel is small, it is the fastest growing tourism market segment.

* A trend toward more exclusive and higher cost private recreational facilities, and the slow development of new publicly-owned recreational facilities could increase pressure on national parks for recreational purposes. Partnerships for regional marketing strategies will become increasingly important. Limits to growth and developmentmust be clearly defined and communicated to prevent incremental growth and maintain a proactive stance toward development pressures.

* With forced economic restraint and the Departmental priority on establishing new national parks, Waterton Lakes National park will continue to be faced with restricted budgets. Programs must be targeted to activities which are closest to the national parks mandate, and alternative means of providing some park programs e.g. through volunteers, cooperating associations or the private sector), while maintaining high quality standards, must be actively pursued.

* As a result of new technologies, the trend now and for the future is for a proliferation of new or modified recreational pursuits. What was once cross country skiing has now diversified into ski touring, telemark skiing, skate skiing and others. The Canadian Parks Service must be in an

anticipatory position with respect to changing recreational activities.

* Mature recreational activities like camping and backpacking are subject to cyclical swings in popularity. However, there are some general trends in activity popularity:

  - "Linear" activities such as cross country skiing, hiking and mountain biking are expected to increase in popularity.

  - Golfing is expected to be "the" sport of the 21st century.

  - Fishing is expected to show increases.

  - Driving for pleasure, one of the most popular recreational forms today, wil fluctuate in response to changes both in energy prices and environmental policy regarding emissions.

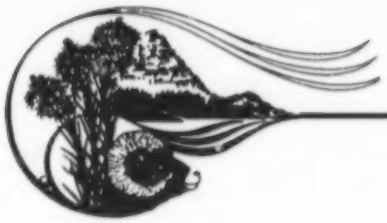
  - Recreational vehicle use is expected to grow consistently to the year 2000, mainly due to the affluent 55+ group.

  - An ageing and therefore less active society will cause further decreases in the number of "purist" backcountry activities and a trend toward increasing frontcountry use.

* Disabled people are increasingly becoming part of the mainstream of society, and a variety of accessible programs are required.

* Volunteerism is growing, especially for seniors with available leisure time. This is an important opportunity for national parks.

* Our society is increasingly becoming a participatory democracy, in which the public seeks direct input into the formulation of government plans, programs and policies. The public is pressuring government institutions to act quickly and innovatively to different groups and to become more responsive to social issues.



3.0 PARK PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES STATE-

The following is the final version of the Park Purpose and Objectives Statement, as amended following public consultation in the summer of 1989.

3.1 PURPOSE OF THE PARK IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

Waterton Lakes National Park protects for all time a unique and extraordinarily diverse assemblage of physical, biological and cultural resources. The park, a representative portion of the southern Rocky Mountains Natural Region, where the mountains abruptly meet the prairie, is dedicated to present and future generations of Canadians and other visitors for their understanding, appreciation and enjoyment.

Waterton Lakes National Park is an integral part of a broad spectrum of international, national and regional agencies responsible for resource management and tourism in the region, and is to be a model of regional cooperation and wise resource management.

The park's protected status enables it to serve as an increasingly important ecological benchmark, to document and demonstrate the effects of global environmental change and man's activities on neighbouring lands.

Waterton Lakes National Park provides high quality recreational and educational opportunities that rely on a natural setting where the protection of heritage resources is paramount. The park is a scenic jewel - an "accessible wilderness" that serves as an important seasonal tourism destination in southwestern Alberta, offering a more tranquil, leisurely-paced experience than the other Canadian Rocky Mountain national parks.

3.2 PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Natural Heritage Resources

a) To protect the natural resources and processes in Waterton Lakes National Park, in particular those physical and biotic themes representative of the southern portion of the Rocky Mountains Natural Region.

b) To provide the greatest possible protection to those features, processes or species which are unique, sensitive, rare or endangered in a park, regional or national context.

c) To place an emphasis on protecting habitats which are of limited distribution and extent, without which certain species would not occur.

d) To manage the natural resources of Waterton Lakes National Park based on scientific knowledge and with minimal interference to natural processes, coordinating resource management and research activities with authorities and individuals responsible for managing adjacent lands.

e) To protect the visual integrity of the park's natural beauty.

Cultural Heritage Resources

a) To protect and conserve the cultural resources of Waterton Lakes National Park,

particularly those which are nationally or internationally significant or are good examples of human interaction with the landscape of southwestern Alberta.

Rationale

The park's unique and diverse natural resources and processes are to be protected to ensure that present generations will continue to appreciate and enjoy them in their natural state. Cultural resources will be managed in a manner which allows present and future generations to appreciate and enjoy the rich cultural heritage of southwestern Alberta.

3.3 APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT OF PARK RESOURCES

a) To provide a range of high quality visitor opportunities consistent with the purpose of the park, for both day and overnight use, and for persons of varying ages, abilities, knowledge, economic means and interests.

b) To emphasize the summer, spring and fall seasons in providing visitor opportunities.

c) To manage services and facilities using a customer oriented approach, where the needs of visitors are fully considered along with resource protection and budgetary considerations.

d) To provide a range of orientation, information and interpretation services inside and outside the park which enables the public to better understand and protect park resources, in addition to safely enjoying their visit.

e) To enhance the park's educational role, with the aim of increasing environmental awareness among members of the public.

f) To present the park's heritage resources to the public in a manner which reflects the main park interpretive theme - "Where the Mountains Meet the Prairie" - and associated sub-themes.

g) To continue to concentrate commercial and park administrative facilities in the Waterton townsite.

h) To allow for the provision of facilities and services to meet the community requirements of permanent and seasonal park residents (e.g. housing, schooling, fire and other emergency services).

i) To develop partnerships and cooperative strategies for enhancing regional tourism which are consistent with the purpose of the park, thus making the park a model of sustainable tourism.

j) To enhance the touring opportunities along existing park roads, without developing new transportation corridors.

Rationale

These opportunities and resulting actions are aimed at enhancing visitors' and residents' experiences within the park, and at helping to foster greater public awareness of the park's varied recreation, wilderness and cultural values.

3.4 REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND CONSIDERATIONS

a) To actively support and promote the principles and objectives of the Man and the Biosphere Program, as well as the spirit of friendship and cooperation embodied in the International Peace Park designation.

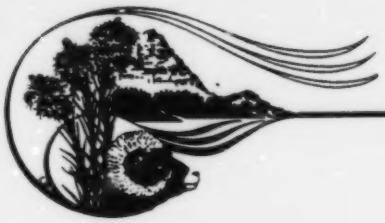
b) To develop partnerships and cooperative strategies for enhancing research, resource management and regional tourism within the Crown and the Continent Ecosystem, consistent with the purpose of the park.

c) To continue to serve as an important recreational resource for regional residents, while increasing understanding and appreciation of the park's role in protecting heritage resources and minimizing the duplication of opportunities available outside the park.

d) To provide opportunities for the public living in adjacent regions to become involved in park planning and plan implementation.

Rationale

These objectives recognize the park's position within the region and on-going regional integration initiatives. The objectives help to guide the protection and management of Waterton Lakes National Park in ways that are complementary with the surrounding regions of Alberta, British Columbia and Montana, as well as making social and economic benefits available to residents of the region.



4.0 PARK CONCEPT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Park Concept sets the stage for the objectives and plan proposals contained in the remaining sections of the Plan Concept. First, the philosophical basis on which the Plan Concept was developed is presented in Section 4.2 - Guiding Principles and Beliefs. These principles and beliefs are based on the strategic direction of the Canadian Parks Service and the future trends identified in Section 2. Next, a statement of what the Canadian Parks Service envisions for the future protection, use, management and development of the park is provided in Section 4.3 - A Vision for the Future. Section 4.4 contains the application of the national parks zoning system to Waterton Lakes National Park. The proposed zoning plan gives an overview of the relative emphasis to be placed on resource protection and use in various parts of the park.

4.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

1. The mandate of the Canadian Parks Service is to protect nationally significant natural and cultural features and processes. Within this protection mandate, visitors are encouraged - their impact will be managed so that the park's ecological integrity is not compromised.

2. Waterton Lakes National Park has an important role to play as a model of sustainable use. Clearly defined limits to use and development are required to protect resources and maintain ecological integrity for future generations.

3. Park visitors are our most important constituents. They are essential to the continued existence of the national park system. The Canadian Parks Service has the responsibility to provide high quality and satisfying park experiences.

4. Waterton Lakes National Park is an integral part of a broad spectrum of international, national and regional agencies responsible for resource management and tourism in the region. Regional cooperation and consultation are essential to the continued integrity of the park. The park must be viewed by other agencies as a partner in regional tourism and resource protection initiatives.

5. Defining the park's regional market position is an important step toward achieving resource protection as well as tourism goals, since it allows the park to focus efforts on relevant park experiences and opportunities, and to respond proactively to development and use pressures. Park programs, facilities and services must be targeted to specific market segments to ensure appropriate use of human and financial resources, as well as ensuring that appropriate, high quality park experiences are provided.

6. Waterton Lakes National Park plays an increasingly valuable societal role in protecting declining wilderness, wildlife and natural landscapes in the region.

7. Waterton Lakes National Park, like all national parks, should play an important educational role aimed at fostering a sense of environmental stewardship among the Canadian public and their international guests.

8. The Canadian Parks Service cannot meet the direction contained in this plan without the

help of a variety of private and public sector partners. The Canadian Parks Service must take a leadership role in these partnerships, to ensure that the park's mandate and objectives are fulfilled.

9. Unlike new national parks, Waterton Lakes National Park has a well developed and extensively used facility and service infrastructure. The emphasis over the next 15 years should be on protecting park resources, enhancing the park experience and managing visitor impacts.

4.3 A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In the year 2006 (the end of the fifteen year lifetime of the Park Management Plan), Waterton Lakes National Park will be a world class protected area consistent with the park's international status as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and International Peace Park. Resources will be managed on an regional ecosystem basis, in close cooperation with the managers of lands surrounding the park. The scientific community will be involved in assisting the park to reach high standards in park science. Systematic research and monitoring programs will be in place in support of resource protection and management objectives.

High quality park experiences will be provided, but not all needs or expectations will be met. A priority will be placed on meeting the needs of visitors seeking park experiences which are consistent with and foster support for the protection of heritage resources. Canadian Parks Service programs, facilities and services will be targeted toward recognized market segments, with an emphasis on high priority visitor groups such as the sightseer, heritage appreciation and backcountry enthusiasts groups.

Facility development will be concentrated along existing park roads, particularly and in and adjacent to the community of Waterton Park. New private sector development will have been limited to infilling within the community. The majority of the park will be managed as wilderness, in recognition of the innate value of wilderness and its continuing decline throughout North America. The park will continue to provide some of the most accessible wilderness in the Rocky Mountain national parks.

The park will be in a position to meet its tourism and resource protection roles by monitoring trends and anticipating external economic, recreational, tourism, political and technological changes which could affect the park. Anticipated growth in visitation will have been accommodated primarily in the fall and spring shoulder seasons, and through day use. The park will be a short-term destination for most visitors, and an emphasis will be placed on meeting the needs of visitors from southwestern Alberta, who will continue to make up the majority of the park's users.

The character of the community will be that of a leisurely-paced, small village. New development will have consisted primarily of low density commercial accommodation which is in keeping with this character.

A wide variety of public and private sector partnerships will be in place to assist the Canadian Parks Service to meet its objectives for resource protection, enhancing the park experience and managing visitor impacts. Through partnerships, cooperative activities and involvement in regional planning and resource management programs, the park will be managed, not in isolation from its neighbours, but as a key player in regional tourism and resource management.

Visitors and regional residents alike will have a high level of awareness of national park and environmental stewardship values, as well as the value of the resources protected within Waterton Lakes National Park. Interesting and informative

educational services and programs will be readily available.

The park will be applying state-of-the-art visitor management techniques to minimize the impact of visitors on heritage resources. Standards and monitoring programs will be in place for environmental and service quality, as well as facility development, redevelopment and maintenance.

4.4 LAND USE ZONING

THE NATIONAL PARK ZONING SYSTEM

Land use zoning is a management tool used to establish the relative emphasis to be placed on protection and visitor use of specific park lands. A five part zoning system is used. Its application is based on the park purpose and objectives, as well as an analysis of natural and cultural resources and potential and current uses. The proposed land use zoning plan for Waterton Lakes National Park expresses the application of Parks Canada Policy and park management knowledge to the specific context of the park. A summary of the intent of each of the five land use zones is provided below.

Zone I - Special Preservation

The primary purpose of Zone I areas is to preserve unique, rare or endangered natural or cultural features, or the best examples of the features of a natural region. Access and use will be strictly controlled or may be prohibited altogether. No motorized access will be permitted. Visitor appreciation and park research programs consistent with resource preservation may be provided.

Zone II - Wilderness

Extensive areas which are good representatives of each of the natural history themes of the park and which will be maintained in a wilderness state are considered Zone II areas. Only certain activities requiring limited primitive visitor facilities appropriate to a wilderness experience will be allowed. Limits will be placed on numbers of users. No motorized access will be permitted. Management actions will ensure that visitors are dispersed.

Zone III - Natural Environment

Zone III areas are maintained as natural environments which can sustain, with a minimum of impairment, a select range of low-density outdoor activities with a minimum of related facilities. Non-motorized access will be preferred. Activities are usually dispersed. Some rustic fixed roof accommodation may be provided.

Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation

Limited areas that can accommodate a broad range of education, outdoor opportunities and related facilities in ways that respect the natural landscape and that are safe and convenient will be considered Zone IV areas. Motorized access will be permitted and may be separated from non-motorized access. Facility development and some landscape alteration may occur.

Zone V - Park Services

Zone V includes towns and visitor centres in certain existing national parks which contain a concentration of visitor services and support facilities, as well as park administration functions. Motorized access will be permitted.

ZONING IN WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

The proposed zoning plan for Waterton Lakes National Park is shown in Figure 2 and a discussion of the application of each zone is provided below.

Zone I - Special Preservation (2% of park lands)

A number of candidate Zone I areas, protecting significant natural and cultural features, have been identified and are described below. The park contains a multitude of significant, rare or endangered resources. The Zone I designation was applied conservatively in Waterton Lakes National Park, in the interest of not compromising the importance of the designation. Resource sensitivity and the ability to adequately protect resources under other designations, such as Zone II - Wilderness or Environmentally Sensitive Sites, were important criteria in designating Zone I areas.

Management guidelines will be developed to manage resources and visitor use in each of these areas. Section 5 of this Plan Concept proposes further research and the development of comprehensive, ecologically-based management strategies to ensure the protection of park resources. Additional Zone I areas could be designated as a result of these studies.

1. The Maskinonge Wetlands

This wetland/marsh complex is one of the few remaining natural wetlands in southwestern Alberta. The wetlands are a key migratory waterfowl staging area and important waterfowl nesting area. Several rare, endangered or threatened bird species, such as trumpeter swans, bald eagles and red-necked grebes are known to frequent the area.

Two highly significant archaeological sites have been found on the shores of Maskinonge Lake. These have been included in the Zone I designation.

2. Lineham Discovery Well

The Lineham Discovery Well was designated a National Historic Site in 1965 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. A plaque has been erected to commemorate the "First Oil Well in Western Canada".

3. Archaeological Sites

There are approximately 250 known archaeological sites in Waterton Lakes National Park, dating back almost 11,000 years. Zone I designations are applied to the most significant of these sites.

Zone II - Wilderness (79% of park lands)

The majority of Waterton Lakes National Park will be managed as Zone II - Wilderness. It is the intention of the Minister of the Environment to recommend to the Governor-in-Council the designation of wilderness areas on the basis of the park land use zoning plan. All identified Zone II lands and appropriate Zone I lands within them would be recommended for Order-in-Council designation as Wilderness Areas. This will have the effect of defining these areas by government regulation and preventing any level of development beyond that required for providing essential services and ensuring the protection of park resources.

Warden patrol cabins, to be used solely for operational purposes, will remain in this zone. Other man-made facilities will be restricted to trails and designated campgrounds. All former roads in this zone will be allowed to revegetate naturally or will be rehabilitated to a suitable trail standard. Further details on visitor facilities in wilderness areas are provided in Section 6.9.

Certain non-conforming activities and facilities may be permitted at certain times in the park's wilderness areas where they are essential for the purposes of park administration, resource protection, public safety and the maintenance of basic visitor facilities. These activities and facilities include use of motorized equipment related to search and rescue, fire control, backcountry patrols and facility maintenance.

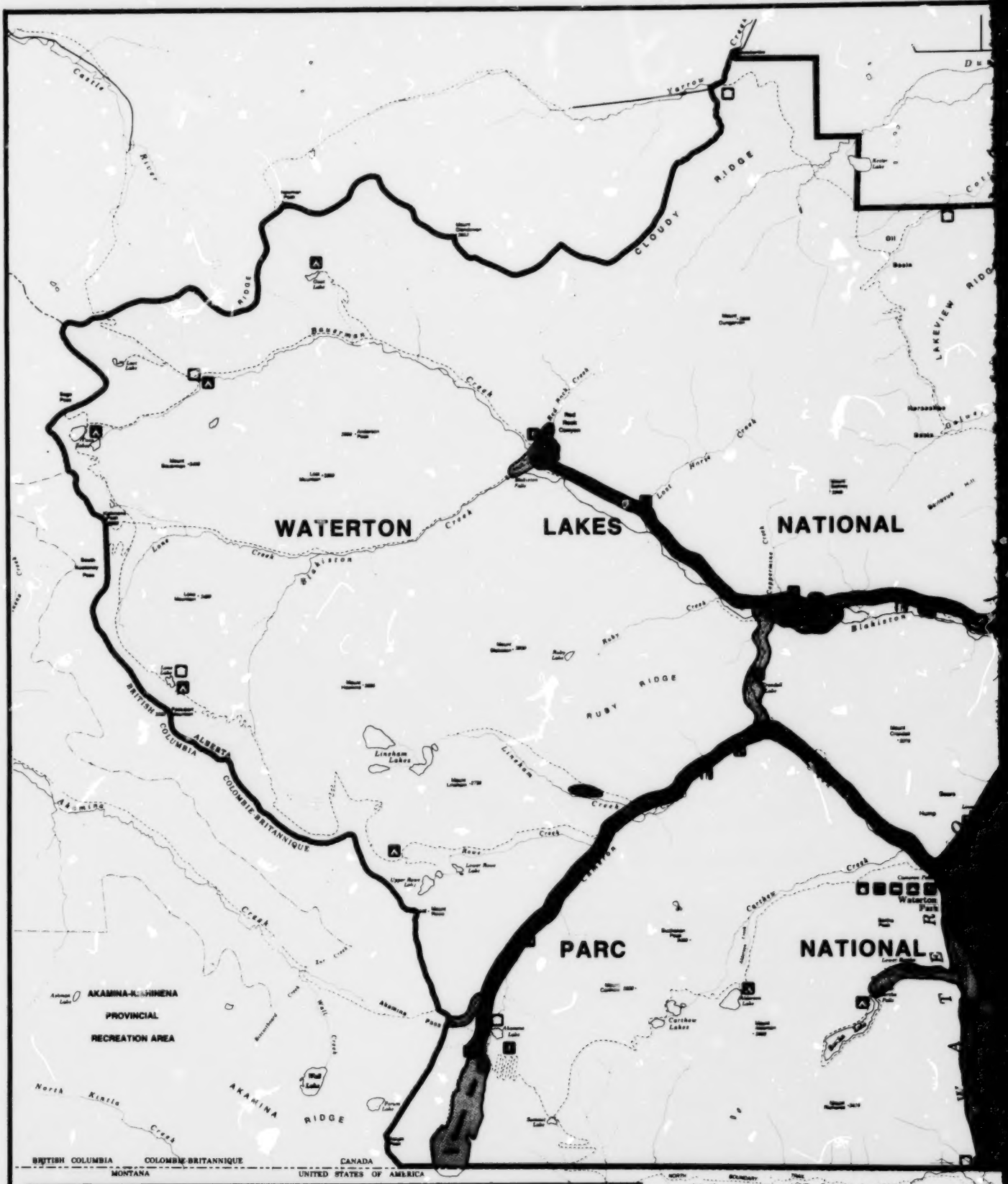
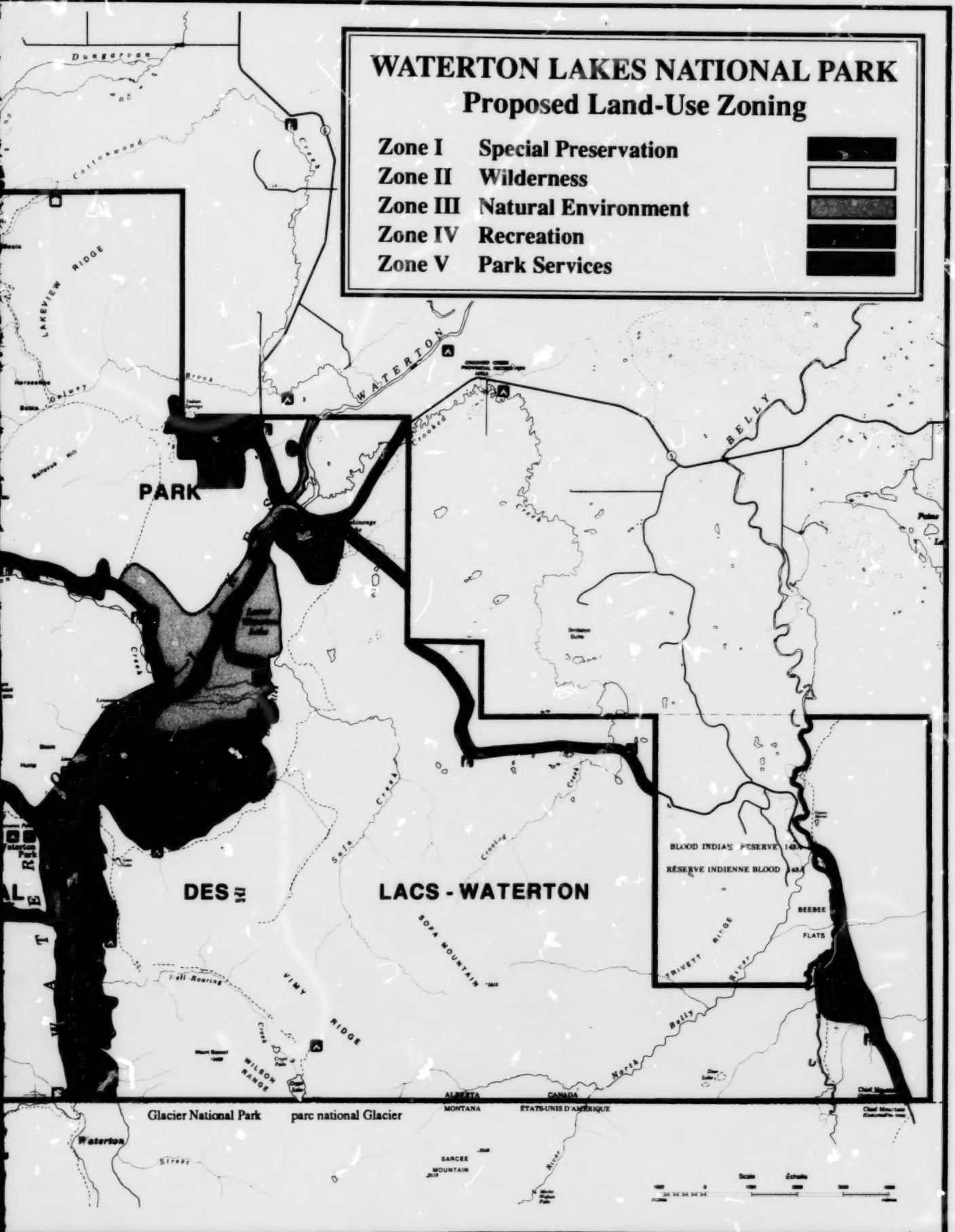


Figure 2: Proposed Land-Use Zoning - Waterton Lakes National Park


WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK
Proposed Land-Use Zoning
Zone I Special Preservation
Zone II Wilderness
Zone III Natural Environment
Zone IV Recreation
Zone V Park Services
PARK
DES
LACS - WATERTON
WATERTON
BELLY
LAKEVIEW RIDGE
VIMY RIDGE
SOFA MOUNTAIN
BLOOD INDIAN RESERVE
RÉSERVE INDIENNE BLOOD
BEEBEE FLATS
TRIWETT RIVER
Glacier National Park
parc national Glacier
ALBERTA
MONTANA
CANADA
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE
Waterton
BARRIER MOUNTAIN

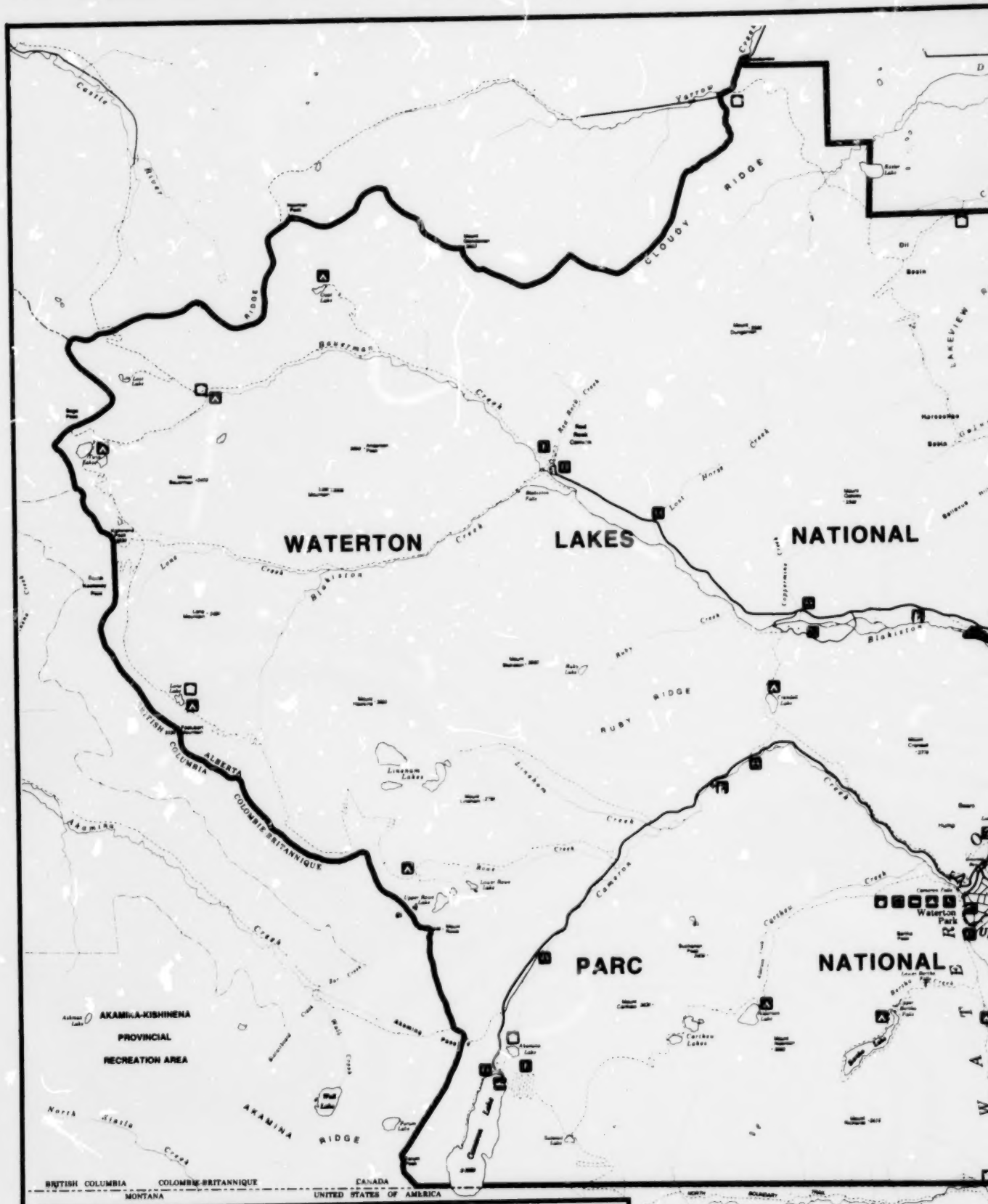
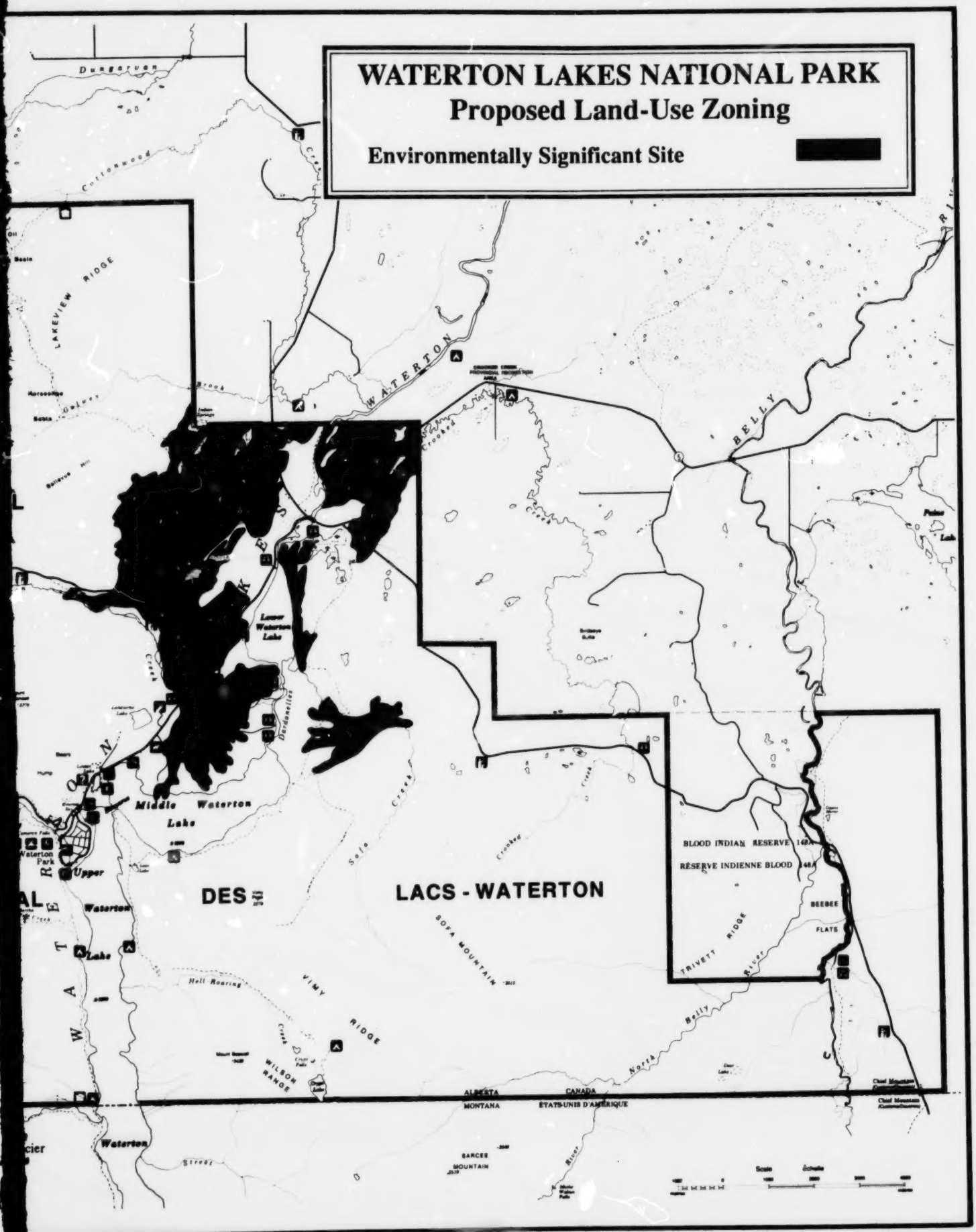


Figure 3: Fescue Grasslands - Environmentally Sensitive Site


WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK
Proposed Land-Use Zoning
Environmentally Significant Site
LACS - WATERTON
BLOOD INDIAN RESERVE 148A
RÉSERVE INDIENNE BLOOD 148A
Middle Waterton Lake
Upper Waterton Lake
Lower Waterton Lake
Waterton Park
WATERTON
BELLY
LAKEVIEW RIDGE
SOPA MOUNTAIN
VIMY RIDGE
WILSON RANGE
TRIVETT RIDGE
BEEBEE FLATS
ALBERTA
MONTANA
CANADA
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE
BARNES MOUNTAIN

Zone III - Natural Environment (7% of parklands)

This zone is applied to limited areas where visitor use concentrations require the development of facilities which exceed the acceptable standard in Zone II areas. Some areas are designated as Zone III because of their proximity to and visibility from park roads or frontcountry facility nodes. No motorized access will be permitted in these areas and rigorous protection is required because of their ecological and aesthetic importance. Zone III lands in Waterton Lakes National Park include most of the Blakiston Fan, a portion of the grasslands adjacent to the park entrance road and Red Rock Parkway, the Bertha Lake trail, the Waterton Lakeshore trail, Cameron Lake, the Crandell trail and the trail to Blakiston Falls.

Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation (12% of park lands)

Zone IV areas in Waterton Lakes National Park include a 200m wide right-of-way along park roads open to public vehicle access as well as frontcountry campgrounds, picnic sites, viewpoints, major trailhead parking areas, the bison paddock and other roadside developments. Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes are designated as Zone IV because of the unrestricted motor boat access.

Zone V - Park Services (less than 1% of park lands)

The community of Waterton Park is the sole Zone V area in the park. The boundary and some general guidelines for the community are defined in Section 7. Land use within the community will be guided by the Waterton Community Plan.

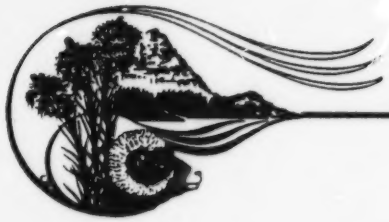
ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

The Environmentally Significant Site (ESS) designation is applied to areas within the park containing significant and sensitive heritage resource features which require special protection (Figure 3). Unlike Zone I areas, an ESS can accommodate higher levels of controlled visitor activity without jeopardizing heritage resource values. The ability to adequately protect resources through other designations such as Zone II was another important criterion used to identify ESSs.

Area-specific guidelines for the Fescue Grasslands Ecoregion, the sole ESS in Waterton Lakes National Park, will be developed to identify the appropriate levels and types of visitor use, as well as resource management strategies. The guidelines will reflect the high priority placed on protection of these significant areas.

The Fescue Grasslands

Commonly known as "bunchgrass prairie", the Fescue Grassland Ecoregion is a narrow band of prairie which stretches along the plains and foothills from Southern Alberta into Montana. It is typified by the Festuca scabrella/Danthonia parryi grass association. Waterton Lakes National Park contains the only example of this particular foothills bunchgrass association protected in the Canadian national park system. The grasslands also contribute substantially to the park's unique character, and its theme - Where the Mountains Meet the Prairie. Wildlife make extensive use of this Ecoregion. Fescue grasslands provide critical winter range for the park's elk herds and important spring range for mule deer and bighorn sheep. Key habitat is also provided for a number of typical prairie species such as badgers, sharp-tailed grouse and Richardson's ground squirrels. Lending additional support to the ESS designation is the important role these protected grasslands play in meeting the objectives of the World Wildlife Fund's Prairie Conservation Action Plan (see also Section 5.6 - Vegetation and Fire Management).



5.0 PROTECTING AND MANAGING HERITAGE RESOURCES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Waterton Lakes National Park protects a unique and extraordinarily diverse assemblage of natural and cultural resources, and is renowned for its exceptional natural scenic beauty. The meeting of mountain and prairie biomes, in conjunction with unique geologic and climatic influences, has resulted in the rich biological diversity which lend a special significance to the park. This diversity has long attracted people, as evidenced by the proliferation of important archaeological sites.

Waterton Lakes National Park was not established along ecological boundaries, and the continued protection of its ecological integrity is dependent upon close cooperation with provincial agencies and private interests managing adjacent lands. Cooperative management with lands south of the park is assured by the presence of Glacier National Park - Waterton's International Peace Park counterpart.

The Guiding Principles and Beliefs outlined in Section 4.3 of this Plan Concept, as well as the Park Purpose and Objectives Statement (Section 3) emphasize that the fundamental mandate of national parks is resource protection. This section of the Plan Concept provides a framework for resource protection and management in Waterton Lakes National Park. Section 6 - Enhancing the Park Experience and Managing Visitor Impacts) provides considerable direction for the management of visitor impacts and education in support of resource protection objectives.

The Canadian Parks Service is responsible for heritage resource management within national parks. The Waterton Lakes Warden Service takes the lead role in protecting and managing park resources and is involved in a number of resource management activities, ranging from bear and fire management to removal of noxious weeds. Communication services and other visitor management activities also play a key role in the protection of heritage resources.

Natural and cultural resources are managed through the Natural Resource Management Process and the Cultural Resource Management Process, respectively. These processes provide a structured approach to the collection, analysis and application of resource information. The Park Management Plan provides the framework within which these two processes are applied in the park.

All projects taking place within national parks are subject to the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP). Reviews are applied stringently to all Canadian Parks Service and private sector development plans to ensure that impacts to natural and cultural resources are within acceptable limits. Proposals arising from the Park Management Plan will be screened through the Environmental Assessment and Review Process. A summary of the environmental and socio-economic impact analysis of this Plan Concept is provided in Section 11.

A final note is warranted on the effects of projected long-term global warming on Waterton Lakes National Park. Since the park is situated at the meeting place of two major biomes - the mountains and prairie - even minor climatic shifts will have a profound effect on the park's ecology. These effects are, of course, beyond the control of park management. They will be closely monitored through initiatives such as the U. S. - Canada global climate change program and appropriate management strategies will be developed as the need arises.

5.2 OBJECTIVES FOR RESOURCE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

1. To manage the park's resources on an ecological basis, stressing their inter-related and dynamic nature.

2. To minimize interference with natural processes.

3. To manage resources in a manner which is consistent with the zone in which they are located, and to concentrate man-made facilities in appropriate zones.

4. To manage visitor use in a manner which ensures the continued ecological integrity of Waterton Lakes National Park, as well as the protection of its cultural resources.

5. To provide the greatest possible protection to unique, sensitive, rare or endangered natural and cultural resources.

6. As the core protected area of the Waterton Biosphere Reserve, to manage park resources in a manner consistent with the aims and principles of the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere program.

7. To become more proactive in establishing dialogues with neighbouring land and resource managers, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding of management objectives and establishing cooperative resource protection and management programs.

8. To increase the Canadian Parks Service's understanding of the park's ecology and cultural history.

9. To base management decisions on sound scientific information derived from systematic inventory and monitoring programs, and to strive for excellence in park science, in part through the involvement of experts from outside the Canadian Parks Service.

10. To increase the use of public education to foster a sense of environmental stewardship and prevent negative impacts on park resources, thereby reducing the need for enforcement, mitigation and rehabilitation activities.

11. To restore previously impacted resources to a more natural state.

12. To recognize the importance of aesthetics as an essential part of the park experience and manage resources and visitor use accordingly.

13. To increase the profile of cultural resources in the park, and better integrate cultural and natural resource management.

14. To serve as a model of environmentally sensitive practices.

5.3 GEOLOGICAL, PHYSIOGRAPHIC AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Waterton Lakes National Park contains a number of special geological, physiographic and paleontological resources. Special features include the Lewis Overthrust, which is geologically unique in the Canadian Rocky Mountains and is of high scientific and interpretive value, the Purcell lava, the Crypt Lake karst system and the serpentine depositional features of the Eskerine Complex. The park contains additional noteworthy examples of physiographic features such as hanging

valleys, paternoster lakes, canyons, alluvial fans and dune complexes. Exposures of fossil algal reefs can be found in areas such as Carthew and Lineham lakes, Lost Horse and Red Rock canyons.

Plan Proposals

* *A priority will be placed on minimizing impacts to park landforms. The Blakiston Fan, Eskerine Complex, Red Rock Canyon and the loess deposits near Crooked Creek will receive special consideration for protection and rehabilitation efforts.*

* *The park will continue to obtain natural materials for construction activities from suitable sources outside the park.*

5.4 RESTORATION OF PREVIOUSLY DISTURBED SITES

There are man-disturbed sites, such as old borrow pits and access roads, throughout the park which are no longer being used. Unrehabilitated sites can result in unacceptable environmental impacts such as erosion, soil compaction, drainage disruption and the establishment of noxious weeds. Aesthetic impacts are important as well.

Plan Proposals

* *Future disturbances to park lands will be minimized. Any activity that disturbs a landform will not be approved until all necessary rehabilitation plans have been put in place.*

* *A priority will be placed on completing and implementing the park's rehabilitation plan which identifies and sets priorities for areas requiring active rehabilitation as well as required funding.*

5.5 HYDROLOGICAL, AQUATIC AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

The park contains a significant number of aquatic resources. The scenic quality of the Waterton Lakes gave the park its name, and the park's lakes, rivers and waterfalls are important visitor attractions. The park also protects the headwaters of several internationally significant watersheds - the Waterton, Belly and Cameron. At the present time, some diversions have occurred to prevent flood damage and provide drinking water to some man-made facilities.

The Canadian Parks Service works closely with other agencies to maintain water quality standards and minimize pollution. Recent studies show the park's water quality to be excellent.

Controlled sport fishing of naturally regenerating fish populations is supported in the park. The objective for sport fishing management is to protect the aquatic ecosystems and maintain viable native fish populations. Catch limits, tackle and bait restrictions and seasonal closures are currently the primary tools used to manage sport fishing in Waterton Lakes National Park. Current management practices do not adequately provide for the protection of aquatic species nor do they provide a high quality fishing experience. More scientific information is needed to better manage the resource.

Plan Proposals

* *The Canadian Parks Service will ensure that sound effluent management occurs at all facilities in Waterton Lakes National Park.*

* *Water quality will be monitored and, wherever necessary, measures will be taken to eliminate or prevent pollution.*

* *Standards will be followed to ensure that any necessary modifications of stream channels*

or flows will be made in ways that minimize water siltation, loss of habitat and changes to natural flow patterns.

* *The dams on Cameron, Ruby and Crandell creeks will be removed once satisfactory groundwater supplies are developed.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will encourage the development of wells for drinking water, and alternate sources (e.g. treated sewage effluent) for golf course watering and fertilizing.*

* *Aquatic resources will be managed on an ecological basis, through the development of an aquatic resources management plan. Stocking programs will not be undertaken other than to re-introduce extirpated native species.*

* *A fisheries management plan will be developed which will address:*

  - *resource inventories;*
  - *a fisheries research and monitoring program;*
  - *maintenance of viable native fish populations in the park;*
  - *regional cooperation;*
  - *the status of all fish species in the park and development of appropriate management strategies;*
  - *the potential for re-introduction of extirpated native aquatic species; and*
  - *public consultation.*

5.6 VEGETATION AND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Waterton Lakes National Park is recognized as an area of great diversity with respect to vegetation. Six ecoregions (Alpine, Subalpine, Montane, Aspen Parkland, Foothills Transitions and Fescue Prairie) are recognized, largely defined by differences in climate and vegetation. Approximately 55% of the vascular plants that occur in Alberta are found in the park. The park contains the only example of Fescue Prairie (Festuca danthonia) protected in a Canadian national park.

A number of vegetation types found in this area are not found elsewhere or are of limited occurrence in Canada. These include the extensive Fir-Whitebark Pine forests, large areas of Limber Pine scrub and "intermediate" alpine meadow associations, where prairie species have extended upslope to mix with alpine and subalpine species. The Maskinonge and Sofa wetlands are also important for the presence of rare plant and bird species, the presence of significant archaeological sites, as waterfowl staging and nesting areas and critical ungulate habitat. The park also contains an exceptional number of plants (43) that are considered to be rare nationally, and an even larger number of plants that are rare provincially.

In the past, Waterton Lakes National Park has followed a program of wildfire suppression based on a rapid initial attack, in cooperation with Glacier National Park and the Alberta and British Columbia forest services. The success of this suppression policy has altered the natural ecological balance. The Canadian Parks Service now recognizes fire as an important natural process which plays an integral role in vegetation succession, and is vital to maintaining the diversity of park ecosystems. Park facilities and neighbouring lands will continue to be protected from wildfires. An interim fire management program and research into the role of fire in the park ecosystem is underway.

The park contains a number of plant species which are exotic, some of which are classed as noxious weeds. A control program for spotted knapweed has been in effect since 1978, and limited control action has been taken on other problem species such as burdock, Canada thistle and leafy spurge. Current studies indicate the need to broaden this program to include other exotic plant species.

Insect and disease outbreaks have had their effect on the vegetation mosaic within the park. A Mountain Pine Bark Beetle epidemic between 1978 and 1984 resulted in extensive loss of mature pine forest and an on-going White Pine Blister Rust is affecting both whitebark pine and limber pine forests.

Plan Proposals

* *Further research will be undertaken to increase the understanding of the ecological importance of the Fescue Grasslands, Aspen Parkland and Foothills Transitions ecoregions. Methods of managing and protecting the vegetation associations within these ecoregions will be developed and implemented. Special measures will also be developed to minimize the harmful consequences of human use.*

* *Vegetation will be managed on an ecological basis, recognizing the complex interactions between vegetation and other components of the park's ecosystems. A vegetation management plan will be developed to:*

  - *update the vegetation component of the park's resource inventory, with an emphasis on identifying areas that contain ecologically important vegetation associations and rare plant species;*

  - *develop objectives and actions for ecologically-based vegetation management;*

  - *develop actions which fulfill the objectives of the World Wildlife Fund's Prairie Conservation Action Plan in managing the Fescue Grasslands ecoregion;*

  - *demonstrate a commitment to protecting examples of old growth forest in southwestern Alberta;*

  - *monitor and evaluate the state of the park's vegetation and prescribes actions in response to any undesirable changes to vegetation that result from human interference; and*

  - *promotes regional cooperation in vegetation management.*

* *Rehabilitation plans must be developed and approved before undertaking any activity that may harm vegetation.*

* *Research programs will identify and assess the present distribution of unique, rare and endangered vegetation species or associations and actions will be undertaken to ensure that they are given a high level of protection.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will continue to manage and maintain areas of natural vegetation that depend on fire as part of their natural cycle. A fire management plan (a component of the vegetation management plan) will be developed for the park which includes:*

  - *continued research into the park's fire history, paleobotany, the use of fire as a management tool and the role fire plays in various vegetation associations;*

  - *the use of planned ignition fires ("prescribed burning") in selected areas where they are needed to maintain natural vegetation, and in order to gain further experience and knowledge about the nature of fires;*

  - *restoration of the natural fire cycle to the Fescue Grassland, Aspen Parkland and Foothills Transition ecoregions;*

  - *aggressive suppression of wildfires that threaten park facilities or public safety; and*

- *cooperative fire management and suppression strategies with neighbouring land managers.*

* *Plans will be developed for the monitoring of insect infestations and disease, as well as the management of non-native plants.*

* *Vegetation and fire management programs will be integrated with wildlife habitat management programs.*

5.7 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Waterton Lakes National Park is noted for its abundant and visible wildlife. The wide diversity of habitats (over 25 have been mapped) is reflected in a similar diversity of fauna. Over 300 terrestrial wildlife species, including several threatened or rare birds and mammals are found in the park. The park's unique geographical situation means that many southern and prairie subspecies make their appearance. The park is also on the margin of two major waterfowl migratory flyways, so wetland areas are used extensively as staging areas and migratory stopovers.

Virtually all the large ungulate and carnivore populations move across park boundaries at some point through the seasonal cycle. The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park offers an international sanctuary and migration corridor, but cooperation with land managers on adjacent lands is essential to the well-being of many wildlife populations.

The main topics of wildlife management concern in Waterton Lakes National Park are: the protection of important habitat throughout the park and on adjacent lands; grizzly bear management; wildlife habituation; and the management of wildlife which seasonally migrate across park boundaries, particularly elk.

Plan Proposals

* *A wildlife management plan will be developed for the park which:*

  - *is based on established wildlife management objectives;*

  - *establishes a systematic wildlife population and habitat monitoring program which will drive the park's research activities;*

  - *provides management strategies for species requiring active management;*

  - *directs special protection efforts toward rare, endangered or threatened species (as designated by COSEWIC, provincial agencies or with an equivalent status under the United States Endangered Species Act); and*

  - *integrates wildlife management activities with those of thevegetation/fire management program.*

* *Areas identified as critical wildlife habitat will be protected. Criteria for identifying critical habitat will include:*

  - *habitats of limited distribution and extent in the park without which certain species would not occur;*

  - *areas used as breeding sites by rare, sensitive, or threatened species; and*

  - *vitally important seasonal habitat.*

  Seasonal or temporary closures to visitor use may be necessary to ensure the protection of these habitats or wildlife using the habitats.

* *The Canadian Parks Service will actively seek the cooperation of provincial agencies, Glacier National Park and others in the establishment of a coordinated approach to the management of wildlife for which they share responsibility. The impact of park wildlife on neighbouring activities (e.g. elk feeding on haystacks and grizzly bear predation on cattle) will be a consideration in developing a management approach.*

* *Strategies will be developed to address habituation of wildlife to people and facilities.*

* *The feasibility of removing the bison paddock and establishing a small free-roaming herd of plains bison in the park will be examined.*

5.8 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources include archaeological and historic resources. The Canadian Parks Service is committed to protecting and preserving cultural resources in national parks. The potential impact of any development on cultural resources will be assessed through the Federal Environmental Impact Assessment and Review Process. The Cultural Resource Management Policy provides a logical framework for the identification, significance rating, protection and monitoring of cultural resources.

Waterton Lakes National Park is particularly rich in archaeological sites (about 240 sites are now known to exist), dating back over 10,000 years. A number of sites have been proposed as Zone I - Special Preservation areas in the Zoning section of this Plan Concept. Some places in the park, notably vision quest sites, retain a special spiritual significance for local native people.

The park also contains three federal heritage buildings, designated under the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Policy. These are the former Registration Building, the RCMP detachment building and RCMP garage. The site of the first oil well in Western Canada at Oil City has been designated a National Historic Site.

Although the survey and significance rating of archaeological sites has been fairly comprehensive, additional work is required on establishing the significance of historic structures in the park and on protecting and preserving significant resources.

Plan Proposals

* *A Cultural Resource Management Plan will be developed, which includes:*

  - *an on-going research program, including an inventory of historic buildings in the park;*

  - *preservation plans for significant sites threatened by natural and human disturbance, including an assessment of the feasibility of stabilizing key archaeological sites at Emerald Bay, The Narrows and Linnet Lake;*

  - *a monitoring program to assess the effectiveness of preservation efforts;*

  - *an analysis of the relationship between archaeological resources and their physical environment;*

  - *a summary suitable as background information for interpretive programs; and*

  - *the establishment of a working relationship with local native groups and other government agencies responsible for cultural resource management.*

* *A cultural history of the park will be prepared.*

* *The procedures of the Federal Heritage*

Buildings Review Office will be applied in the management of park-owned buildings, to ensure that valuable cultural assets are protected and to set an example for other Federal Government agencies.

* *In addition to sites identified as Zone I - Special Preservation, vision quest sites and other native spiritual sites will receive a priority for protection.*

* *Interpretation, either on-site or off-site, will be emphasized in the cultural resource management program.*

* *The involvement of local native people in identifying, interpreting and protecting the park's native cultural resources will be actively sought.*

* *Cultural resource research will be integrated with other natural resource and climatological research, and with the park's Ecological Land Classification program.*

5.9 AESTHETICS

Some of the more important elements of a quality park experience include scenery, clean air, water, quiet, the presence of wildlife and the expanses of natural landscapes. Aesthetics are an important part of the peoples' perception of national parks as well managed natural areas.

Whether visitors choose to visit the community of Waterton Park, the parkways and their associated facilities or more remote backcountry locations, they come to the park in search of some level of peace and beauty. Throughout the park, visitors should be able to find places where they can experience a feeling of isolation and discovery. In the backcountry, these feelings are most important, and silence becomes part of the park's aesthetics. It is the responsibility of the Canadian Parks Service to ensure that visitors are able to find the aesthetic values they seek.

The Architectural Motif and Guidelines for Waterton Lakes National Park will guide the visual appearance of new and redeveloped built facilities. Although signs are necessary, a balance between the best possible visitor orientation and minimizing visual intrusions must be struck. The scars of development, such as road cuts and borrow pits should intrude as little as possible on park vistas.

Plan Proposals

* *The aesthetic effects of existing land uses and daily park operations will be evaluated. Actions will be taken to minimize negative effects and enhance those that are positive.*

* *The aesthetic quality of the park will be an important consideration in the evaluation of all land use proposals and future operational activities.*

5.10 RESEARCH

A variety of research activities are carried out each year in Waterton Lakes National Park, ranging from archaeological investigations to tracking grizzly bears to studying ticks. Some of this research is carried out by or under contract to the Canadian Parks Service, while other projects are initiated by university departments and individuals.

The benefits of this research are many. Research enhances understanding of natural world and man's interaction with it. The knowledge gained through research also enables park managers to make more informed management decisions. For these and other reasons, appropriate scientific research is supported and encouraged in the park. There are numerous opportunities to encourage relevant research in support of sound decision making and improve understanding of

the park's natural and cultural history by taking advantage of expertise available outside the Canadian Parks Service.

Plan Proposals

* *Non-intrusive research activities, which do not conflict with the protection of heritage resources, will be accommodated in the park.*

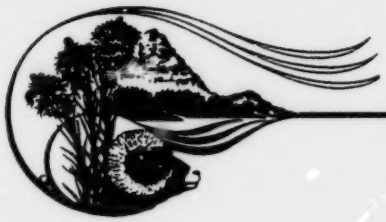
* *The park's research strategy will be enhanced so that it:*

  - *identifies and sets priorities for natural and cultural history, as well as visitor management research activities, based on criteria such as the relevance of the research to park management issues;*

  - *forges liaisons with universities and other agencies involved in relevant research, in order to promote coordination of research endeavours and to make the most of expertise outside the Canadian Parks Service;*

  - *promotes sharing of research results with all interested parties, and cooperation in research activities with regional land managers; and*

  - *increases the scientific expertise of park staff.*



6.0 ENHANCING THE PARK EXPERIENCE & MANAGING VISITOR IMPACTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Plan Concept deals with the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of Waterton Lakes National Park by the Canadian public and their international guests. Appropriate park visitor experiences are discussed, as well as programs aimed at existing and potential visitors. It is important to read the following with the Guiding Principles and Beliefs (Section 4.3) and the Park Purpose and Objectives Statement (Section 3) firmly in mind.

The Park Management Plan provides conceptual direction which requires further study and elaboration to be converted into meaningful action. The Park Service Plan, to be developed following the approval of the Park Management Plan, will provide the necessary strategies and action plans for implementing the Park Management Plan.

This portion of the Plan Concept begins with a brief overview of the current situation with respect to park visitation and some overall objectives for the provision of park experiences. The assessment of current and potential markets is described and the park's tourism market position is defined. These are seen as important steps toward ensuring that Waterton Lakes National Park provides an appropriate range of opportunities and establishing priorities for allocating human and financial resources. Finally, proposals and priorities are outlined for each of the seven visitor activity groups, or market segments, which have been defined for the park.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

An exit survey carried out in 1986/87 indicated that approximately 325,000 people were attracted to Waterton Lakes National Park that year. Park visitation fluctuates, but has been relatively stable over the last 5 years following tremendous increases in the 1960s and 1970s and a minor decline in the early 1980s. Typically, visitors are regional residents from southern Alberta or the northwest United States whose primary destination is Waterton Lakes National Park. Visitors stay an average of 1.4 nights, and there are many return visitors.

Levels and types of use vary considerably from one season to the next. Waterton Lakes is very much a summer season park. Seventy percent of park visits occur in the summer, and facilities are generally filled to capacity. Only 9% of park use occurs in the winter, and most facilities are closed. There is a potential to increase visitation in the spring and fall shoulder seasons, but winter outdoor recreational use will always be restricted by marginal snow conditions and the attractiveness of other regional opportunities.

According to the 1986/87 survey, the typical Waterton Lakes visitor is in the 34 to 54 years of age category and is a well-educated professional, technical or retired person with a relatively high income. The most common mode of transportation is the private vehicle, but the bus tours appear to be increasing. Sightseeing from a vehicle, taking short walks and viewing park wildlife are the most popular park activities.

The Canadian Parks Service, private businesses and the Waterton Natural History Association (a non-profit cooperating association) provide a variety of facilities and services for visitors, most of which are concentrated in the community of Waterton Park. Visitor services and facilities in the community include commercial accommodation, a campground, gas outlets, restaurants, information outlets, interpretive displays, trails, gift shops, a post office, marina, public swim-

ming pool and grocery outlets. Dispersed facilities such as trails, parkways, campgrounds and picnic areas are located outside the community. The majority of park recreational activity is centred around the community, park roads and the shores of scenic Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes.

The park's relatively small size means that most of the park is accessible on a day use basis from the community. In the backcountry, approximately 283 km of trail of varying lengths and difficulty lead to scenic destinations. Designated backcountry campsites are used by approximately 2,000 overnight visitors each year. Backcountry day use is estimated at at least 27,600 people in 1989. Short strolls are far more popular than the longer trails, and hiking is the predominant backcountry activity, along with lesser amounts of horse and trail bicycle use.

6.3 ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND POTENTIAL MARKETS

Assessment of Current Markets

As part of Plan Concept development, current visitors to Waterton Lakes National Park were segmented into groups based on the type of experience and benefits they seek from their park visit. Seven market segments, or Visitor Activity Groups, were identified, profiled and priorized as part of this exercise. Priorities are based on: the size of the group; the extent to which the group is aware and supportive of environmental stewardship and the national park mandate; the importance of Waterton Lakes National Park as the setting for the activities carried out by the group; and the impact of the group on the park's natural and cultural resources. The objectives and plan proposals in sections 6.6 to 6.13 are based upon these Visitor Activity Groups, and are presented in a declining order of priority. The groups, in order of priority, are:

1. The Sightseer Group
2. The Heritage Appreciation Group
3. The Backcountry Enthusiasts Group
4. The Leisure Group
5. The Challenge Seeker Group
6. The Package Group
7. The Sports Enthusiasts Group.

By establishing priorities, direction is being given to the scheduling of implementation and to areas where the Canadian Parks Service's increasingly limited resources should be directed. Indicating that a visitor activity group is lower in priority than another does not imply that the lower priority group is not welcome or that the group will see a reduction in service. The high priority items will be addressed earlier in the 15 year life span of the plan than the lower priorities and alternate methods of delivering service to lower priority groups may be considered rather than using the Canadian Parks Service's limited resources. Regardless of the priority established and method adopted for implementation, a commitment to ensuring quality is maintained.

Also many recommendations identified for high priority groups benefit other users. For instance, road improvements may be directed toward the sightseer group (a high priority), but in fact all park users would benefit.

It is recognized that many individuals may be part of a number of groups during their park visit. In addition, there are seasonal and full-time park residents who at different times seek experiences associated with various Visitor Activity Groups.

Assessment of Potential Markets

An assessment of potential markets is an important part of the Plan Concept. The park must anticipate pressures from potential visitors so it can be in a position to deal with them. Understanding potential markets also enables park managers to target outreach and marketing efforts where they will be most effective in achieving the purpose and objectives of the park.

A summary of key potential markets for Waterton Lakes National Park, based on an examination of existing studies using a variety of segmentation techniques, is described below. Once they become park visitors, most potential visitors would fit into one or more of the visitor activity groups described above and programs, services and facilities can be targeted accordingly.

The Southwestern Alberta Market

Southwestern Alberta visitors, from Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, Cardston and surrounding areas, currently make up the largest geographic group (35% annually) of park visitors. Other groups are from a variety of geographic origins. They will likely continue to do so in light of the barriers which impede increased use by other geographic markets (see below), the high profile the park enjoys in the region, its accessibility even on a day use basis, and the lack of similar opportunities in the region. In many respects, the park serves as a regional attraction, and southwestern Alberta residents have the greatest potential to be repeat visitors.

Other Alberta

The greatest potential "other Alberta" market is the Calgary market. Calgarians currently make up only about 9% of Waterton's annual visitation. This is due in large measure to the three hour drive and proximity of alternative opportunities in Banff National Park and Kananaskis Country. It would take a strong promotional effort, focused on the positive differences between Waterton Lakes and Banff national parks, to attract large numbers of Calgarians to the park. Marketing Waterton Lakes National Park along with other complementary regional opportunities such as the interpretive centres at Head-Smashed-In and Frank slide, would make a more attractive package for the "other Alberta" market segment. There is potential for growth in two to three day visits by Calgarians, particularly in the spring, fall and winter seasons.

Pacific Northwest United States

The joining of Waterton Lakes and Glacier national parks as an International Peace Park already attracts many U.S. touring visitors to Waterton Lakes as an extension of their Glacier National Park visit. This will likely continue into the future, and could increase if the profile of the International Peace Park is increased. Promotion of other initiatives, such as the Trail of the Great Bear and the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem would also greatly enhance the profile of Waterton Lakes National Park among northwestern U.S. residents and visitors.

Growth in spring and fall visitation by this segment is possible, along with increased day trips from Glacier National Park during the summer.

Other Canada and International

Both these market segments have limited potential for Waterton Lakes National Park over the next ten to fifteen years for a number of reasons. Barriers include: the lack of upscale accommodation and restaurants which are expected by international visitors; the distance of the park from the closest international and national gateway city (Calgary); and the competition afforded by Banff's international and national reputation.

The Nature and Culture Segment

Several trends point to a growing interest in nature-related activities and exploring one's own or others' cultural heritage. As well, travellers are increasingly seeking an educational component to their vacation. The Nature and Culture segment is predominantly a national or international market. The size of this segment is significant (and growing), as is their potential for economic impact on the park and surrounding area.

Waterton Lakes National Park, in conjunction with key cultural attractions in the region, is in a unique position to capitalize on this interest.

The Relaxation and Adventure Getaway Segment

As urban pressures and development increase, the park will increasingly be sought as a place to escape the hustle and bustle of the city to pursue relaxation and adventure activities in a natural setting. Waterton Lakes National Park provides excellent opportunities for relaxation and "soft" adventure activities such as day hiking, horse riding, boating and photography. Many of these activities are expected to become increasingly popular over the next ten to fifteen years.

The Conferences, Seminars and Meetings, and Motorcoach Tour Segments

Demands from both these segments are expected to increase over the lifetime of this plan. At the present time, the park does not provide the necessary infrastructure to support or attract large numbers of these groups. The park's future ability to do so is in the hands of the private sector.

6.4 THE TOURISM MARKET POSITION OF WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

The following statement summarizes the position which will be supported and promoted for tourism in Waterton Lakes National Park. The Canadian Parks Service will work in concert with park business and regional tourism partners to ensure that this market position is followed for all tourism activities which affect the park.

> *Waterton Lake National Park is a world class protected area, which has received international recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and as the world's first International Peace Park (in conjunction with Glacier National Park in the United States). This relatively small national park is spectacularly scenic and diverse, and presents a tranquil and more accessible wilderness environment than the Rocky Mountains of the Four Mountain Parks or Glacier National Park in Montana.*
>
> *The park is primarily a short-term getaway destination for regional residents. Visitation must be limited in order to protect heritage resources, although there are opportunities for growth in day use and in overnight visitation in the spring and fall.*
>
> *There are ample opportunities to explore aspects of Canada's natural and cultural heritage protected within the park boundaries, including abundant and visible wildlife. High quality educational programs are available to enhance this exploration.*
>
> *Recreational activities are encouraged which complement and support the park's primary role of protecting heritage resources. The park is best suited to providing soft adventure and leisure recreational opportunities such as sightseeing, wildlife viewing, hiking and taking short strolls, photography, trail riding, camping and boating.*
>
> *A full range of visitor amenities is provided within the park's small, village-like community. Outside the community of Waterton Park, more dispersed facilities such as trails, parkways, campgrounds and picnic areas serve to enhance visitors' exploration of the park's natural and cultural heritage.*
>
> *Waterton Lakes National Park is an integral component of a regional tourism package, along with such attractions as Glacier National Park in Montana, the Head-*

Smashed-In and Frank Slide interpretive centres, historic Fort McLeod and several provincial parks and recreation areas.

6.5 OBJECTIVES FOR ALL GROUPS

1. **To provide high quality, integrated park experiences which consider the linkages among various recreational activities, communication services and others, rather than managing activities and facilities in isolation from one another.**

2. **To provide park experiences which:**

   - **rely on and are consistent with protected heritage resources and the park's natural scenic beauty;**
   - **foster a sense of environmental stewardship;**
   - **maintain the park's ecological integrity;**
   - **are consistent with the tranquil, leisurely-paced character of the park;**
   - **rely primarily on the existing facility infrastructure;**
   - **promote understanding and appreciation of the heritage resources protected with the park boundaries;**
   - **do not conflict with the park experiences of others enjoying appropriate activities; and**
   - **are carried out within the appropriate park zones.**

3. **To improve the Canadian Parks Service's understanding of Waterton Lakes National Park visitors, their numbers, relevant trends, needs, values, motivations and level of satisfaction with their park experience.**

4. **To employ state-of-the-art visitor management strategies and clearly defined limits of acceptable change in order to monitor and minimize visitor impacts on park resources.**

5. **To take a market-oriented approach to the provision of park experiences, and base the allocation of human and financial resources for visitor activities and facilities on the relative priorities of the target market groups.**

6. **To actively seek on-going dialogues with the park's tourism and recreation stakeholders to promote mutual understanding, and work with these stakeholders to provide the best possible park experience.**

7. **To become an active and respected partner in defining and providing high quality, integrated and appropriate regional tourism opportunities.**

8. **To encourage more complete use of park facilities and services.**

9. **To increase the accessibility of a cross-section of park themes, opportunities, facilities and services to visitors with disabilities.**

10. **To promote a sense of dedication to serv ice excellence among park and stakehold ers' staff.**

11. **To promote, and encourage others to pro mote, a sense of environmental steward ship among park visitors and regional residents.**

12. **To provide, and encourage others to pro vide, targeted educational programs which provoke thought, and reveal mean ing and relationships about the natural and cultural heritage protected in Water ton Lakes National Park, consistent with the park theme "Where the Mountains Meet the Prairie".**

6.6 COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Communication services are essential to public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of Waterton Lakes National Park. They provide opportunities for the public and the Canadian Parks Service to exchange information, ideas and values. Through this exchange, an understanding of the significance of park resources is nurtured, park visits are made more enjoyable, appropriate use is encouraged and the public gains a sense of stewardship for and involvement in the protection of park resources.

A range of communication services is necessary to meet the needs of the Canadian Parks Service and the public. This range can be defined by the following headings based on the various stages of a park experience.

Outreach Programs

Outreach programs are directed toward creating a general awareness, support and appreciation of Waterton Lakes National Park and the national park system, to audiences beyond the park boundary. They also present messages related to understanding heritage resources and man's relationship to the natural environment. Examples of outreach programs include television shorts, school programs and displays at special events such as the Calgary Stampede.

Pre-Trip Planning Services

These services provide information to assist people in planning a trip to Waterton Lakes National Park. Information may be provided by telephone, in pamphlets available at regional information outlets or through the mail.

Park Arrival, Reception and Orientation

Once the visitor arrives at the park gate a variety of services are required to welcome and orient them to park opportunities and limitations. This information is usually fairly general in nature and is provided through signs, brochures and limited personal services.

In-Park Communication Services (Information and Interpretation)

More detailed information, related to enjoy ing specific park activities, is required once visitors have entered the park. These information services are provided at information centres, through signs, personal contact with park and concession staff and written material. In-park interpretation services enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the park's heritage resources and help foster a sense of environmental stewardship. Guided walks, slide presentations, displays and pamphlets are examples of in-park interpretation services.

Much of the direction for in-park communi cation services is provided in the sections pertaining to individual visitor activity groups (see below). There are however, a number of objectives and messages which are relevant to all park visitors. This general direction is provided here.

Departure

Communication services at this stage of the park visit are aimed at providing visitors with opportunities to comment on their park experience, and helping them to continue on to their next destination. Follow-up surveys and letters are considered part of the departure stage.

Public Involvement

Public involvement programs provide opportunities for the public to become actively involved in the management and operation of national parks. This includes public consultation programs for the Park Management Plan and reviews, as well as volunteer programs and cooperative activities.

Enhancing communication services will be a high priority for the park over the next 15 years. Within this high priority activity, however, some aspects, such as in-park interpretation/information and park arrival, reception and orientation will receive more of an emphasis than others. Improvements to communication services are often far less costly and more effective than changes to facility infrastructure, resource management, search and rescue or enforcement programs. In many instances, communication services can serve to prevent visitor impacts or hazardous situations. The Canadian Parks Service cannot provide communication services in isolation from others, and many other individuals/agencies are willing to deliver national park messages. Developing partnerships and improving cooperation in the delivery of communication services will, therefore, be a priority.

Detailed objectives for communication services may be found in the complete Plan Concept available at regional centres identified in the covering letter. Communications services directed toward individual activity groups are outlined in the sections of the Plan Concept dealing with specific groups.

6.7 THE SIGHTSEER GROUP
(includes Pleasure Driving, Boat Tours,Walking/Strolling, Bicycle Touring and Photography)

Sightseers are primarily frontcountry visitors whose main activity is viewing and enjoying park heritage resources, such as landscapes, wildlife, flora and historical resources. Pleasure driving, viewing wildlife and walking/strolling are the most popular activities in the park at the present time. Most visitors engage in sightseeing at some time during their visit, but for the purposes of park management, this group is considered to consist of those whose primary aim in visiting the park is to sightsee and who seek a number of common benefits in their park experience.

This visitor activity group will receive the highest priority for Canadian Parks Service initiatives over the lifetime of this plan. This high priority is due to the group's large size and the relatively minor impact sightseeing activities have upon park resources since they are concentrated in developed frontcountry areas. Use of the park is essentially non-consumptive. There is excellent potential for fostering stewardship values among this group, as these visitors tend to be supportive of the wildlife and landscapes they are enjoying. Trends indicate that visitation by this group is likely to increase over the next ten years.

Objectives

1. **To place a high priority on providing sightseers with a quality park experience, which:**

   - **is relaxing, convenient, secure and requires a minimum expenditure of effort;**
   - **allows visitors to view park landscapes, wildlife and flora in their natural setting, with minimal visual intrusion by man-made facilities;**
   - **provides motorized access to viewing opportunities along existing roads and on Upper Waterton Lakes;**
   - **provides high standard trail access to scenic highlights near park roads, in an environmentally sensitive manner;**

- satisfies visitors' curiosity about the park's natural and cultural features at a broad level; and
- motivates visitors to experience and learn about aspects of the park at a more in-depth level.

2. To foster the growth of this group, within a slightly expanded facility infrastructure, while maintaining a high quality visitor experience.

3. To permit the development of appropriate facilities which enhance the sightseeing experience, within environmental constraints, in Zone IV and V areas of the park.

4. To improve, and make more obvious, linkages among various sightseeing opportunities.

5. To continue to offer low-speed, scenic parkway experiences on the Red Rock and Akamina parkways.

6. To minimize conflicts between sightseers and through traffic on the park entrance road.

7. To manage the Chief Mountain Highway as part of a scenic international drive, linking Waterton and Glacier national parks.

8. To provide high quality communication services which meet the specific needs of this group, including:

   - pre-trip information which ensures that visitors are aware of sightseeing opportunities in the park, and arrive with realistic expectations;
   - convenient in-park orientation to all sightseeing opportunities; and
   - detailed information concerning specific sightseeing activities (e.g. scenic drives, strolls/walks, boat tours).

9. To increase the accessibility of sightseeing opportunities to disabled visitors.

10. To better integrate sightseeing with other associated park opportunities such as picnicking, camping and the townsite.

Plan Proposals

Communication Services

* *Important messages for this group include: available sightseeing opportunities, facilities and services; the story of the park's natural and cultural resources; poor weather alternatives; awareness that they are in a national park and the value of national parks; environmental stewardship; and management messages (e.g. do not harass or feed wildlife, where to obtain first aid, do not litter).*

* *Orientation to sightseeing opportunities will be provided prior to key decision points.*

* *Creative means of reaching sightseers with important messages will be developed.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will develop partnerships with others (e.g. tour boat operator, shuttle bus operators, Waterton Natural History Association) to better meet the information needs of sightseers and ensure that park messages are communicated.*

Park Roads

* *No new roads will be developed in the park.*

* *An assessment of opportunities for additional pull-offs along park roads will be carried out, based on the availability of prime scenic and wildlife viewing opportunities, safety considera-*

tions, the potential for presentation of priority messages and low resource sensitivity.

* *The park entrance road will be maintained to its current standard.*

* *The Akamina and Red Rock parkways will be re-surfaced as necessary, while retaining their leisurely, slow-speed, scenic parkway character. Minor adjustments may be made to dangerous curves or areas of extreme congestion. The roads will not be upgraded to a standard suitable for large tour buses or motorhomes. Recognizable themes and visual symbols will be developed for each of the parkways.*

* *The Chief Mountain Highway will be resurfaced. The park will work with the State of Montana, Glacier National Park, native groups, the province of Alberta and Canada and U.S. Customs officials to ensure a coordinated, high quality scenic driving experience is provided in support of the International Peace Park theme.*

Strolling/Walking Trails

* *Orientation to strolling/walking trails, including trailhead and directional signs, will be improved. Trails will be more clearly linked to other park facilities.*

* *Selected random walking trails associated with campgrounds and picnic areas will be formalized.*

* *Existing trails will be looped wherever possible.*

* *An assessment of potential new strolling/walking trails will be carried out, based on opportunities for scenic viewing and presentation of park themes in conjunction with resource protection and public safety considerations.*

* *A number of trails, representing a range of park themes, will be made accessible to disabled visitors. Priorities for accessible trails include the townsite vicinity, Red Rock Canyon and Cameron Lake.*

Boat Tours

* *Commercial boat tours, to be provided by a single operator, will continue to be supported on Upper Waterton Lake. In the interest of offering high quality boating opportunities in the park, the Canadian Parks Service will investigate the possibility of letting a lease for the boat tour operation in conjunction with other associated facilities such as the marina and fuel sales (see also Section 6.13 - Sport Enthusiasts).*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will work with the tour boat operator to better meet the information needs of customers and ensure that park messages are communicated.*

Bicycle Touring

* *Motorists on the Chief Mountain Highway and park entrance road will be informed of the possible presence of bicyclists. No improvements for touring bicyclists will be made on the Akamina or Red Rock parkways.*

6.8 THE HERITAGE APPRECIATION GROUP

(Includes Culture/Nature Exploration, Education Groups, Scientific Research, and Professional Photography/ Writing)

The Heritage Appreciation group actively seeks to enhance their knowledge about the park's natural and cultural resources, as the main purpose of their park visit.

This visitor activity group will be a high priority for the provision of appropriate programs, services and facilities by the Canadian Parks Service over the lifetime of the Park Management Plan. This is because, while the Heritage Appreciation group is small in size, it offers the greatest potential for long term support of park values. Not only are group members strong supporters of environmental stewardship, they can have a significant multiplier effect by passing park messages on to others. The features of Waterton Lakes National Park are critical to this group. They tend to be more aware of their potential impact on park resources and careful to keep impacts to a minimum. The current increase in environmental awareness, among other trends, indicate that this group will grow in size into the future.

Much of the direction for in-park interpretation and outreach services contained in Section 6.6 - Communication Services applies to this group in particular.

Objectives

1. **To place a high priority on promoting park use by the Heritage Appreciation group and meeting their needs in a manner which:**

   - **fosters a sense of stewardship for the park's heritage resources, and the environment in general;**
   - **supports the quest for knowledge and experience with appropriate programs, services and facilities;**
   - **communicates park themes and messages;**
   - **imparts knowledge about park resources and man's relationship to the environment, while providing opportunities for reflection and intellectual stimulation;**
   - **provides access to interesting park features and resources in an environmentally sound manner; and**
   - **enables the Canadian Parks Service to gain new knowledge about park resources from the experiences of these visitors.**

2. **To monitor the requirements of this group and develop educational services, facilities and programs in response to these requirements.**

3. **To develop partnerships with the public and private sectors (e.g. Waterton Natural History Association, local businesses, native groups, regional natural and cultural attractions, Travel Alberta, tour groups, educational institutions) which assist in meeting the needs of the Heritage Appreciation group.**

4. **To provide an indoor centre for educational activities and detailed message presentation within the park.**

5. **To increase the accessibility of heritage appreciation opportunities to disabled visitors.**

6. **To promote appropriate, non-intrusive research activities which include information sharing between researchers and the Canadian Parks Service (see Section 5.10 - Research).**

Plan Proposals

Communication Services

* *A priority will be placed on providing communication services for this group.*

* *Important messages for this group include: information about available heritage education/interpretation programs, services and facilities; interpretation themes and mes-*

sages; specific information on the park's heritage resources; aggressive wildlife and other potential hazards; and related rules and regulations.

* *The Canadian Parks Service will continue to develop partnerships with others (e.g. Waterton Natural History Association, hotel and motel operators, private nature guiding services, native groups) to enhance communication services for the Heritage Appreciation group.*

Heritage Centre

* *The Canadian Parks Service will work with the Waterton Natural History Association, Waterton Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Association and others to pursue a combined educational/information centre within the community of Waterton Park to replace the current Heritage Centre and the three existing information outlets.*

6.9 THE BACKCOUNTRY ENTHUSIASTS GROUP (includes Hiking and Camping, Private and Outfitter Horse Trips, Trail Bicycling, and Ski Touring)

Backcountry enthusiasts undertake activities that depend upon a scenic natural setting, away from motor vehicle traffic. Both day and overnight backcountry users are included in this group. Visitors undertaking backcountry activities seek a range of opportunities. Some seek areas where there is virtually no contact with other visitors and minimal evidence of man-made facilities, while others seek a higher level of comfort and security in meeting other visitors and finding rustic man-made facilities. To varying degrees, backcountry enthusiasts commonly seek exercise, sightseeing and a sense of self-reliance in settings which require a moderate to high degree of skill and physical effort. Some specialized equipment may be required. Positive backcountry experiences are heightened by a scenic, natural landscape and interesting and/or unique natural features, such as lakes, waterfalls and viewpoints. Infrequent contacts with other visitors are also an important part of the backcountry experience, although social interactions within one's own group may be very important. There is a willingness to sacrifice comfort for an relatively undisturbed natural environment, reflecting a strong belief in environmental protection.

This is a high priority group because they generally possess a strong appreciation of national park values related to the undisturbed, natural landscapes these visitors seek. Waterton Lakes National Park plays a significant regional role in providing backcountry opportunities in a relatively undisturbed state. Despite their stewardship values, this group can have significant impacts upon park resources because of the fragile nature of some backcountry areas and the lack of "hardening" which has taken place to support visitor use.

Trends indicate that overnight backcountry use is not likely to increase through the lifetime of this plan, but backcountry day use will continue to grow in popularity.

Objectives

1. **To continue to manage the majority of Waterton Lakes National Park to provide backcountry opportunities.**

2. **To provide a range of backcountry opportunities offering varying levels of facility development, site hardening, visitor management and contact with other visitors, consistent with visitor needs and maintaining the park's ecological integrity.**

3. **To maximize and designate through Order-In-Council Zone II - Wilderness lands**

(see Section 4.4 - Land Use Zoning), with the intent of maximizing resource protection in the backcountry.

4. To provide, within the intended range of opportunities, high quality backcountry experiences which:

   - are safe, yet challenging, and rewarded by a sense of accomplishment and discovery;
   - allow visitors to experience, on a day and overnight basis, the park's natural environment with minimal contact with other visitors or reliance on man-made facilities;
   - offer a sense of spiritual replenishment;
   - provide non-motorized access to the natural features which are a central attraction for backcountry visitors; and
   - provide opportunities for skill development and social interaction within each party; and
   - leave behind little or no evidence of human activity.

5. To develop, monitor and act upon clear and achievable standards, based on the range of opportunities provided, for:

   - facility development and maintenance;
   - acceptable levels of resource impact; and
   - numbers of contacts with other visitors

   with the aim of becoming a model of excellence for backcountry facility maintenance, resource protection and quality visitor experiences.

6. To use information and education, as opposed to more direct forms of management such as use limits, wherever possible as a means of reducing environmental impact, minimizing conflicts between visitor groups and distributing use appropriately.

7. To provide high quality information to backcountry enthusiasts, in a non-intrusive, educational and positive manner.

8. To manage the backcountry in a manner which is more flexible and responsive to the needs of the different types of backcountry users (e.g. different group sizes, experience and ability levels), within environmental constraints.

9. To continue to provide opportunities for a variety of backcountry activities (e.g. hiking, camping, horse riding, trail bicycling and ski touring) and manage them in a manner which minimizes environmental impact and conflicts among visitors pursuing different activities.

10. To support initiatives which minimize the adverse impact of development on surrounding lands on the park's backcountry.

11. To establish an on-going research program to enhance understanding of backcountry use levels and patterns, trends, visitor needs and motivations and levels of satisfaction.

12. To limit Canadian Parks Service support facilities (e.g. patrol cabins) in the backcountry to those essential for resource protection, maintenance and public safety purposes, and maintain them to a high standard.

Plan Proposals

Range of Opportunities

* *Three classes of backcountry opportunities will be provided in the park, in the areas identified in Figure 4. The most heavily used*

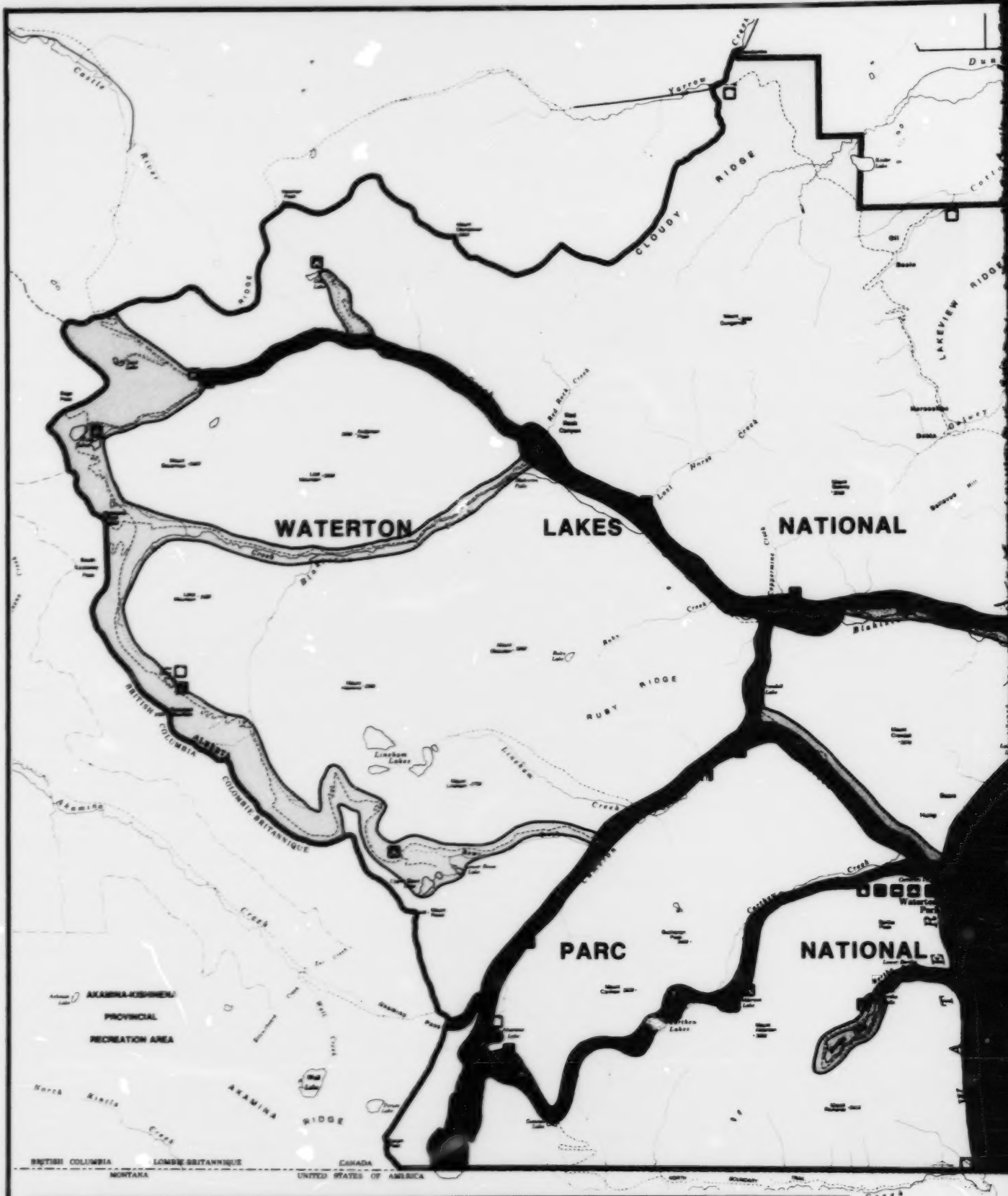
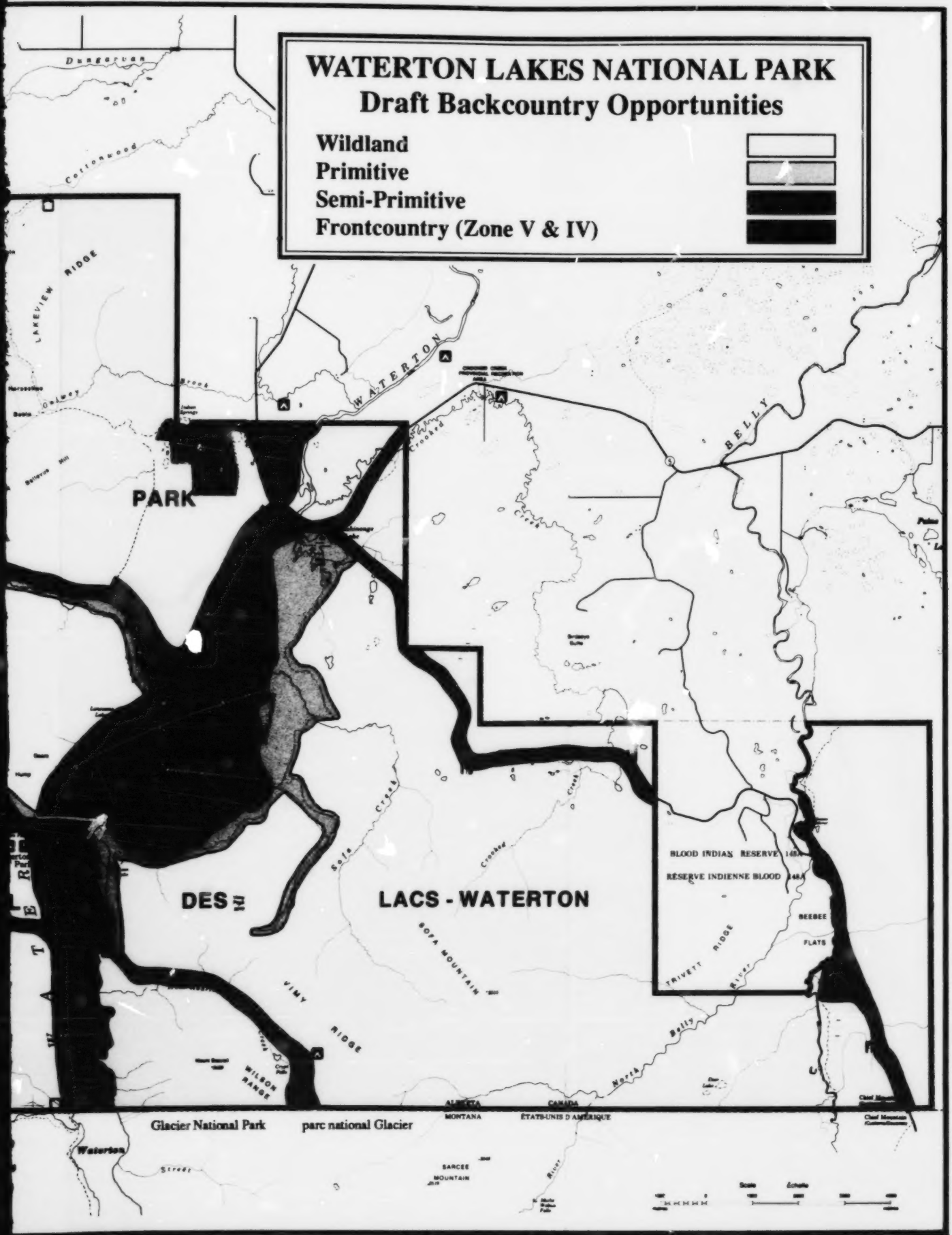


Figure 4: Proposed Backcountry Opportunity Spectrum


WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK
Draft Backcountry Opportunities
Wildland
Primitive
Semi-Primitive
Frontcountry (Zone V & IV)
PARK
LACS - WATERTON
WATERTON
BELLY
LAKEVIEW RIDGE
SOFA MOUNTAIN
VIMY RIDGE
WILSON RANGE
TRIVETT RIDGE
BEEBEE FLATS
BLOOD INDIAN RESERVE
RÉSERVE INDIENNE BLOOD
Glacier National Park
parc national Glacier
MONTANA
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE
SARCEE MOUNTAIN

*and developed areas provide **semi-primitive** opportunities. Facilities such as cook shelters may be acceptable in these areas, and site hardening (e.g. laying out gravel paths and tent pads) and vigorous management of visitors may be required. At the opposite end of the spectrum are **wildland** opportunities; in these essentially undisturbed areas, there are no facilities, random camping may be permitted and the few trails are minimally maintained. Visitors are assisted primarily through information and education. **Primitive** opportunities are intermediate in nature. They include moderate levels of trail development and contacts with other visitors, with designated campsites but no shelters.*

* *Semi-primitive opportunities will be provided on the Crandell Lake, Blakiston Falls, Bertha Falls, Waterton Lakeshore, Crypt Lake, Carthew-Alderson and Snowshoe trails, as well as on Cameron Lake.*

* *Primitive opportunities will be provided on the Tamarack trail (with the exception of the Snowshoe trail), the Goat Lake trail, Bertha Lake beyond the campground, the Vimy trail, and the east lakeshore trail to Crypt Landing.*

* *The remainder of the park's backcountry will be managed to provide wildland opportunities.*

* *The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)** concept will be applied to the various backcountry opportunity areas, as a tool for better managing the backcountry experience and visitor impacts.*

* *More detailed planning will be carried out to specify how the Park Management Plan direction for backcountry enthusiasts will be implemented.*

Communication Services

* *A priority will be placed on enhancing education concerning low-impact backcountry use, both inside and outside the park.*

* *Other important messages for backcountry enthusiasts include: available opportunities, facilities and services, scenic highlights, length and level of difficulty of trails, management messages (e.g. bear warnings, avalanche hazards, group size restrictions); and the types of use (e.g. horse, hiker, bicycle) which may be expected in an area.*

* *Activity-specific information, incorporating the above messages, will be developed for private and commercial horse users, backpackers, trail bicyclists and day hikers.*

* *An emphasis will be placed on providing necessary backcountry information to visitors before they begin their trip. Signs and other media in the backcountry will be kept to a minimum (e.g. consistent, unobtrusive directional signs at trail junctions in semi-primitive and primitive areas).*

* *Trailhead signs will be replaced with more informative and recognizable signs, consistent with the standard being developed for the Four Mountain Parks.*

** The Limits of Acceptable Change LAC concept was developed by the U.S. Forest Service and is being used by a number of agencies to provide a scientific framework, which incorporates public perceptions, for visitor management. Standards are developed for important indicators of environmental quality and visitor satisfaction, such as the level of facility development, level of contact with other visitors and amount of vegetation loss at campsites, within each opportunity class. Regular monitoring is carried out and appropriate management actions (e.g. site rehabilitation, increased education or use limits) are put in place when established standards are exceeded. LAC replaces the "carrying capacity" concept, which has proven to be extremely difficult to define. The LAC concept attempts to answer the question "how much change is acceptable?", as opposed to "how much use is too much?". Experience has shown that the former question is more realistic and more scientific answers are possible.

Trails

* *No new backcountry trails will be developed.*

* *The maximum width, allowable impact, construction materials and techniques and level of trail development will vary according to the opportunity class through which each trail passes. Detailed standards/guidelines will be developed for each opportunity class. Trails will be maintained or recapitalized according to these standards.*

* *The Park Line road will be allowed to revert to trail status and vehicular use will be discontinued.*

* *The access to Lineham Lakes from the Tamarack trail will be formalized only to the extent necessary to address resource management concerns.*

Campgrounds

* *The overnight capacity of the backcountry will remain approximately the same, but use will be redistributed for resource protection purposes and to better meet visitor needs.The capacities of individual campgrounds will be re-assessed based on environmental factors and demand, rather than the current park-wide limit of 12 persons per campground.*

* *Separation between day and overnight users at backcountry camping areas will be sought.*

* *A phased recapitalization program will be carried out for all backcountry campgrounds to reduce environmental impacts and better meet visitor needs.*

* *A motif, standards and appropriate levels of service will be specified for backcountry facilities (i.e. tent pads, shelters, outhouses, bear caches and fire pits) in each opportunity class. Natural materials will be used wherever possible.*

* *The Rowe Meadow campground will be removed, due to the fragile nature of the meadow and the potential for human/bear conflicts.*

* *Three options for camping at the Crypt Lake area warrant further investigation:*

  ***Option 1:** Discontinue camping, making this a day-use only area.*

  ***Option 2:** Relocate the campground to a suitable location below the existing site, and rehabilitate the existing site. In future years, these two campgrounds may be rotated to minimize environmental impact.*

  ***Option 3:** Retain the existing campground, but remove the shelter, which is the primary source of environmental and visual impacts at this campground.*

  Access to this area will be improved regardless of which option is selected. More frequent boat runs which are better tied to user needs will be sought as a condition of negotiating the boat concession agreement in 1992.

* *Random camping will continue to be permitted in wildland areas, until monitoring indicates an unacceptable level of environmental impact. Actions such as definition of campsites will be considered at that time.*

Shelters

* *Simple, rustic cook shelters may be retained in designated Zone III - Natural Environment areas (e.g.Crandell Lake and Bertha Lake) to serve as temporary refuges from inclement weather. Quality facilities will be provided in appropriate locations. Existing shelters in Zone II areas (e.g. Crypt Lake, Alderson, Twin Lakes) will be removed.*

* *The development of shelters or huts for overnight use will not be permitted.*

Fires

* *The provision of firewood at backcountry campgrounds will be discontinued where there is not an adequate supply of deadfall in the in the immediate vicinity. No firewood cutting will be permitted by members of the public. Effective immediately, fires will be prohibited at the Crypt Lake, Goat Lake, Twin Lakes, Alderson and Bertha Lake campgrounds.*

Reservations

* *An advance reservation system will be established for a portion of the park's backcountry campsites.*

Horse Use

* *Horse use will continue to be an appropriate park activity. In order to minimize conflicts between horses and other trail users on busy trails, however, restrictions will be placed on horse use on the Bertha Lake (beyond the Lakeshore trail junction) and Crypt Lake trails during the height of the summer season.*

* *Only one resident horse outfitter will continue to be licensed in the park.*

* *Two options will be considered for managing overnight commercial horse use in the park:*

  ***Option 1:** Maintain the status quo with advance access to the reservation system; and*

  ***Option 2:** Permit a semi-permanent base camp to be established in the vicinity of the Snowshoe warden cabin, and permit day rides only to popular hiker destinations such as Lone and Twin lakes.*

* *Licences will not be granted for non-resident horse guides/outfitters in the park. Agreements will be made with non-resident users of the Akamina Pass trail so that access/egress along this route can continue.*

* *A size restriction of 10 horses will be placed on private and commercial horse parties.*

* *A priority will be placed on improving information to private horse users about group size restrictions, avoiding conflicts with other users and minimizing environmental impacts.*

Trail Bicycling

* *Trail bicycling will continue to be an acceptable park activity, and will be permitted on the following backcountry trails:*

  - *Snowshoe Trail - Red Rock Canyon to Snowshoe warden cabin;*
  - *Akamina Pass Trail;*
  - *Crandell loop - Red Rock Parkway to Akamina Parkway and trails parallel to Akamina and Red Rock parkways; and*
  - *old Y camp road to the Wishbone picnic site.*

Backcountry Patrol Cabins - See Section 9 - Support Facilities

6.10 THE LEISURE GROUP

(includes Frontcountry Camping, Picnicking, Swimming, Lake Canoeing and Paddleboating, Commercial Trail Riding, Fishing and Pleasure Bicycling)

Visitors belonging to this group tend to partake in activities primarily for fun, relaxation and enjoyment. Activities which require low levels of risk and skill development are preferred and visitors

belonging to this group prefer to have their needs fulfilled with a minimum of effort. Other important attributes of the park leisure experience are opportunities for social interaction, entertainment, fresh air, and a sense of "getting away from it all". Access to a wide variety of convenient services and facilities is important, although not at the expense of changing the present character of the community or park to gain more comfort. In addition to the activities listed above, relaxing/ shopping in the community or relaxing at private cottages are activities associated with this group but are not addressed in the Plan Concept.

Meeting the needs of the Leisure group will be a medium priority for the Canadian Parks Service over the lifetime of this Park Management Plan. This is a very large group. Although in general they are not particularly supportive of national park and environmental stewardship values, leisure seekers have the potential to acquire these values. Many activities undertaken by this group could easily take place elsewhere, but the park's natural scenic setting is an important facet of the leisure experience that is not available outside the park. The impact of this group's activities on park resources is considered to be moderate, since they tend to be concentrated in developed areas, but this group has the potential to increase pressure for further development in the park.

Trends indicate that this group will grow in size over the next fifteen years, although changes in use patterns (e.g. an increase in seniors and the use of motor homes as opposed to tents for camping) are expected to occur.

Objectives

1. **To place a medium priority on providing leisure experiences in the park which:**
   - **are relaxing, convenient, secure and require a minimum expenditure of effort;**
   - **take advantage of the park's natural setting;**
   - **are consistent with the tranquil, leisurely-paced character of the park and the community;**
   - **require only minor additions to the park's facility infrastructure; and**
   - **motivate visitors to learn more about the park's natural and cultural resources.**
2. **To place a particular emphasis on building on this group's affinity for the park's natural setting to foster a greater sense of environmental stewardship and national park values.**
3. **To serve as a regional camping destination, providing a range of high quality camping opportunities.**
4. **To continue to rely on the campgrounds outside the park to meet excess demand during peak periods.**
5. **To optimize the use of park campgrounds.**
6. **To better understand the needs of picnickers and respond to their needs through facility relocation and enhancements.**
7. **To accommodate pleasure bicycling in and around the community of Waterton Park, and minimize conflicts between bicyclists, motor vehicles and pedestrians.**
8. **To reduce the financial and human resource burden placed on the park by the swimming pool.**
9. **To increase the accessibility of select leisure opportunities to disabled visitors.**

Plan Proposals

Communication Services

* *A priority will be placed on improving communication services for this group. Important messages include: awareness that they are in a national park; the value and mandate of national parks; environmental stewardship; available leisure opportunities, facilities and services; campground occupancy status/access to a reservation system; management messages (e.g. wildlife feeding and harassment, boating safety, littering); selected park interpretation messages.*

* *Interpretation will be enhanced in locations where leisure activities are undertaken and there are opportunities to present high priority park messages.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will work with others to better meet the information needs of the Leisure group and ensure that park messages are communicated.*

Frontcountry Camping

* *Expansion of campground capacities may occur only through redevelopment at existing campgrounds. No new campgrounds will be developed in the park and the former overflow campground will be rehabilitated.*

* *The primary role of the townsite campground will be to meet the needs of recreational vehicles. Additional electrical hook-ups will be provided. A portion of the campground will, however, be allocated to tenters.*

* *The primary role of the Crandell and Belly River campgrounds will be to provide camping experiences to meet the needs of tenters and others who do not require serviced sites. A portion of the Crandell campground will be redeveloped for small to mid-sized recreation vehicles.*

* *Upgrading necessary to provide high quality opportunities consistent with each campground's role will be carried out.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service may look to future private sector operation and/or maintenance of park campgrounds. Should this occur, stringent operating guidelines will be established to ensure that environmental and service quality remain at a high standard.*

* *The establishment of a campground reservation system will be aggressively pursued.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will work with Canada Customs and Immigration to encourage more use of the Belly River campground by travellers arriving from the United States.*

Picnicking

* *A park-wide assessment of the need for adjustments to the locations, number of tables and type of facilities provided at picnic areas will be carried out, based on site attractiveness, opportunities to present priority messages, resource sensitivity and other nearby opportunities. The overall park capacity for picnicking will not change appreciably.*

Pleasure Bicycling

* *The townsite loop trail will be opened to bicycles. Signs and other mechanisms will be used to minimize bicycle/motor vehicle and pedestrian/bicyclist conflicts in the community.*

Commercial Trail Riding

* *A single concessionaire will continue to be licensed to provide guided trail rides in the park (see also Section 6.9 - The Backcountry Enthusiasts Group).*

* *A system of horse trails will be maintained on the Blakiston Fan and in the vicinity of the*

golf course. Appropriate trail standards will be developed and a monitoring/rehabilitation program will be established in consultation with the operator of the horse concession (see also direction for Communication Services, above).

Lake Boating

* *The concession at Cameron Lake will remain as a rental outlet for canoes and paddleboats in the park. Improvements necessary to provide a safe, high quality operation will be permitted.*

* *Boat rentals at the marina will also be considered, but not at other locations in the park.*

Swimming Pool

* *Efforts will be made to establish private sector operations and maintenance of the community swimming pool. If this is not accomplished by 1995, the facility will be closed.*

6.11 THE CHALLENGE SEEKER GROUP (includes Mountaineering, Ice Climbing, Rock Climbing, White water Canoeing/Kayaking, and Ski Mountaineering)

Challenge seekers pursue high risk activities involving high levels of skill development, physical effort, expertise and in most cases, specialized equipment. With the possible exception of ice climbing, the park does not generally contain suitable physical attributes for their activities and areas outside the park provide better opportunities for this group. Use of the park by this group is not expected to increase to any significant extent.

The Challenge Seeker group will receive a low priority for Canadian Parks Service facilities, services and programs for the lifetime of this Park Management Plan. Challenge seekers are an extremely small group in Waterton Lakes. Impacts caused by this group are minimal, largely because of the small size of the group. Members of this group tend to be very supportive of national park values because they engage in "traditional" park activities and wild, natural landscapes are important to them.

Objectives

1. **To place a low priority on meeting the specific facility and service needs of the Challenge Seeker group, while continuing, through appropriate backcountry management practices, to provide opportunities for experiences which:**

   - **are challenging and rewarded by a sense of self esteem, self-reliance and accomplishment;**
   - **present an element of risk and excitement;**
   - **offer opportunities to develop skills and expertise; and**
   - **can be enjoyed in scenic natural settings with a minimum of interaction with other park visitors.**

2. **To continue to provide high-quality information and rescue services to the Challenge Seeker group.**

Plan Proposals

Communication Services

* *Accurate, up-to-date and activity-specific pre-trip and in-park information will be provided to the Challenge Seeker group. Important messages include: general awareness of the national park mandate and that they are/will be in a nationalpark; river/ice/snow/weather conditions; route information; management*

messages (e.g. bear activity, hazardous activity registration procedures); and rescue capabilities.]

Facility Development

* *No new facility development will occur specifically to meet the needs of this visitor activity group.*

Rescue Services

* *An emergency response and rescue capability for the Challenge Seeker group will be maintained in Waterton Lakes National Park.*

6.12 THE PACKAGE GROUP

(includes Bus Tours, Group Camping, Seminars/Conferences/Meetings, and Youth Camps)

Visitors comprising the Package group are in the park as part of an organized group, are on a set schedule and usually seek information, facilities and services in a convenient package form. Reasons for park visits among this group are varied, but opportunities for socializing are important. The park's scenery is generally important to this group, and they are very facility-oriented.

Meeting the need of the Package group will be a low priority for the Canadian Parks Service for the first five years of the lifetime of this Park Management Plan The package group is currently a small group in Waterton Lakes National Park, largely because of the few opportunities geared to their needs. Their impact on park resources and other visitors' experiences can be high because of large group sizes and concentrated use. The park setting is an important part of this group's experience, but it tends to be only one aspect of a varied regional experience. While stewardship and national park values are not generally high among members of this group, promotion of these values to groups is easier than to individuals. The group's priority will be re-evaluated in five years time in light of potential private sector initiatives and increased demand.

Trends indicate growth in this visitor activity group, due to the ageing population and the growing search for comfort and convenience in leisure activities. There is also considerable potential for growth in off-season visitation by this group. The level of growth and the park's ability to accommodate growth are largely dependent on private sector initiatives. Strategies which affect this group will be developed through the revised Community Plan and the Community Tourism Action Plan. As a result, it is difficult to predict the future for the Package Group in Waterton Lakes National Park at this time. On-going monitoring and re-assessment of priorities will be required.

Objectives

1. **To place a low priority on meeting the needs of the Package group with Canadian Parks Service facilities, programs and services over the next five years.**

2. **To closely monitor trends and private sector initiatives directed toward this group and periodically re-assess the priority of the Package group.**
3. **To work with and encourage the private sector and group leaders to provide park experiences for the Package group which:**

   - **promote awareness, understanding and first-hand experience of the park's natural and cultural resources;**
   - **foster a sense of environmental stewardship and support for the national parks mandate;**
   - **do not conflict with the enjoyment of the park by other visitor activity groups;**

- **are consistent with the desired character of the park community, parkways and major frontcountry areas such as the parkways, Prince of Wales Hill, Cameron Lake and Red Rock Canyon;**
- **are comfortable, secure and convenient; and**
- **are available to visitors with a wide range of economic means.**

4. **To consider the needs of the Package group when redeveloping park facilities, such as picnic areas, strolling/walking trails, parking lots, the Heritage Centre and roadside exhibits.**

5. **To place an emphasis on improving communication with this group for the purposes of better understanding their needs, minimizing their impacts on park resources, and keeping conflicts with other visitors to a minimum.**

Plan Proposals

Communication Services

* *A communications strategy will be developed specifically for this group. Important messages include: available opportunities for package groups; awareness that they are in a national park and the value of the park system; environmental stewardship; management messages (e.g. harassment or feeding of wildlife, littering, vegetation trampling); and selected interpretation themes and messages.*

* *An emphasis will be placed on reaching package groups with park messages before they arrive in the park, or upon arrival.*

* *The Canadian Parks Service will develop partnerships with others (e.g. tour operators, group leaders, park businesses) to better meet the information needs of package groups and ensure park messages are communicated.*

Bus Tours

* *Opportunities for bus tours will be concentrated in the main Waterton valley, the community of Waterton Park, and along the Chief Mountain highway. The Akamina and Red Rock parkways will not be upgraded to a standard suitable for large tour buses (see also Section 6.7 - The Sightseer Group). Limits to tour bus use of the parkways will be considered if conflicts with private vehicles reach an unacceptable level.*

* *Future development of overnight accommodation to meet the needs of bus tours must be in keeping with the community's low density, small village-like character (see Section 7 - The Community Concept).*

Group Camping

* *Group camping needs for tenters and recreation vehicles will continue to be met at the Belly River group campground. The campground will be redeveloped to handle more, smaller-sized groups within the same total capacity.*

Youth Camps

* *Four options are proposed for the operation of the Canyon Camp and Camp Columbus:*

  ***Option 1:** Close and remove the facilities when their licences of occupation expire in 1995 due to associated environmental impacts and because they are not dependent on a national park setting;*

  ***Option 2:** Retain the facilities and allow the present mode of operation to continue, while*

providing educational programs to promote low impact use and environmental stewardship;

Option 3: *Close Camp Columbus due to its location on the environmentally significant Blakiston Fan and susceptibility to flooding, and tender the operation of the Canyon Camp facilities upon expiry of the licence of occupation for the purpose of providing low-cost hostel accommodation to the general public; and*

Option 4: *Close Camp Columbus and tender the operation of the Canyon Camp facilities upon expiry of the licence of occupation to serve as an environmental education/research facility.*

6.13 THE SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP (includes Motor Boating, Sailboarding, Water Skiing, Scuba Diving, Golfing, Nordic Skiing, and Sailing)

The Sports Enthusiasts group is comprised of visitors whose primary focus is skill development and enjoyment of a particular sport activity. This is a diverse group, with very specific setting, facility and technological requirements. Comfort and convenience in carrying out preferred sport activities often takes precedence over protecting the natural environment. Challenge, competition and exercise are important to sports enthusiasts, as well as social interaction, fresh air, fun, and a sense of self-esteem.

Meeting the needs of this visitor activity group will be a low priority for the Canadian Parks Service over the lifetime of this Park Management Plan. The low priority of this group reflects its moderate size and the numerous opportunities to carry out their activities outside the park. The park setting is not particularly important to this group and the need for activity-associated facilities can have negative impacts on park resources.

Objectives

1. **To place a low priority on meeting the needs of the Sport Enthusiasts group.**

2. **To provide park experiences for this group which:**

   - **offer a sense of personal challenge and exercise;**
   - **foster an understanding and appreciation of the park's natural setting and its resources, as well as a sense of environmental stewardship;**
   - **do not adversely affect park resources; and**
   - **do not adversely affect the experiences of other park visitors.**

3. **To reduce the financial and operational requirements placed on the Canadian Parks Service by this group, while ensuring that quality facilities and services are provided to meet basic needs.**

4. **To restrict summer Sports Enthusiast activities to Zone IV andV areas of the park.**

5. **To reduce visitor conflicts in the Emerald Bay area.**

Plan Proposals

Communication Services

* *Communication services to the Sports Enthusiasts group will be enhanced and directed toward individual activities. Important messages include: opportunities and limitations for Sports Enthusiasts activities in Waterton Lakes National Park; environ-*

mental stewardship; awareness that they are in a national park and the national park mandate; low impact use; etiquette toward other visitors; and public safety messages (e.g. park rescue services, cold water safety, first aid services).

* *An emphasis will be placed on providing park messages at the pre-trip stage and at key activity sites in the park (e.g. golf course, rental outlets, Emerald Bay, marina).*

Water-Based Activities

* *Motor boating will restricted to Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes.*

* *Overnight camping on boats will not be permitted. Backcountry use permits will continue to be required for overnight use of the boat-accessible campgrounds on Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes.*

* *Boat launches will continue to be provided in the vicinity of the marina and Linnet Lake.*

* *Private sector operation and maintenance of the marina will be pursued.*

* *Motor boating will be prohibited in a portion of Emerald Bay to reduce conflicts between motor boats and other users. In keeping with this initiative, the Canadian Parks Service boat dock will be relocated. Communication of basic boating etiquette will also be increased (see Communication Services - above).*

* *A limited surface-oriented rescue response capability will be maintained.*

* *The requirements of scuba divers and windsurfers will be examined as part of the Prince of Wales Hill Area Plan (see Section 8 - Roles and Objectives for Major Frontcountry Areas).*

Golfing

* *Upon expiry of the current concession agreement, the golf course operation will be tendered for a longer-term lease agreement, requiring the ability to deliver a clearly defined level of service, quality standards and necessary capital improvements.*

* *Neither expansion of the golf course beyond the current 18 holes nor the development of on-site commercial accommodation will be permitted.*

Nordic Skiing

* *Track-set nordic ski trails will be concentrated along the Akamina Parkway.*

7.0 COMMUNITY CONCEPT

This Plan Concept does not address specific land use, zoning and regulatory issues within the community. Rather, it proposes broad direction concerning the intended role of the community within the park, its character, form, density, seasonality and size. An architectural motif and guidelines for the community, and the rest of the park, was developed in 1987 following considerable public consultation. The motif and guidelines will remain valid through the lifetime of the Park Management Plan. In addition, several proposals contained in other sections of the Plan Concept have implications for the community, such as the proposal to privatize the swimming pool.

The objectives and proposals presented below reflect the realities of the historic development of the community, as well as its current form and character, public perceptions and anticipated trends. It is expected that the primarily seasonal operation of community services will remain in effect over the next ten to fifteen years. This seasonality will likely continue to inhibit major capital investment by the private sector. There are insurmountable physical constraints to expansion of the community's boundaries, although ample opportunities exist for infilling to meet anticipated needs. Strong public support has been expressed for retaining or enhancing the community's current character and the mix of residential, commercial, cottage and institutional land uses. Appropriate levels and types of commercial accommodation is an important planning issue.

A plan for the community, entitled Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Centre Development Plan, was approved in 1978. A number of the actions contained in the 1978 plan have been implemented over the past decade. Others have not due to financial limitations of the Canadian Parks Service and the private sector, or changing trends in tourism and visitor preferences. This community plan will be updated following the approval of the Park Management Plan, to address specific community issues. Public consultation will play an important role in the revision of the community plan.

Another on-going initiative which will have an important influence on the future of the community is the development, through a Tourism Alberta initiative, of a Community Tourism Action Plan. Every effort is being made to integrate the proposals of the Community Tourism Action Plan with those of the revised Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan so that the Canadian Parks Service and the private sector are working toward a common vision in providing tourism facilities and services in the community.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **To retain the primary function of the community as a visitor service centre within a national park.**

2. **To concentrate any new facility development within the community.**

3. **To minimize the impact of the community on the natural environment in which it is located, park wildlife and significant historical and archaeological resources.**

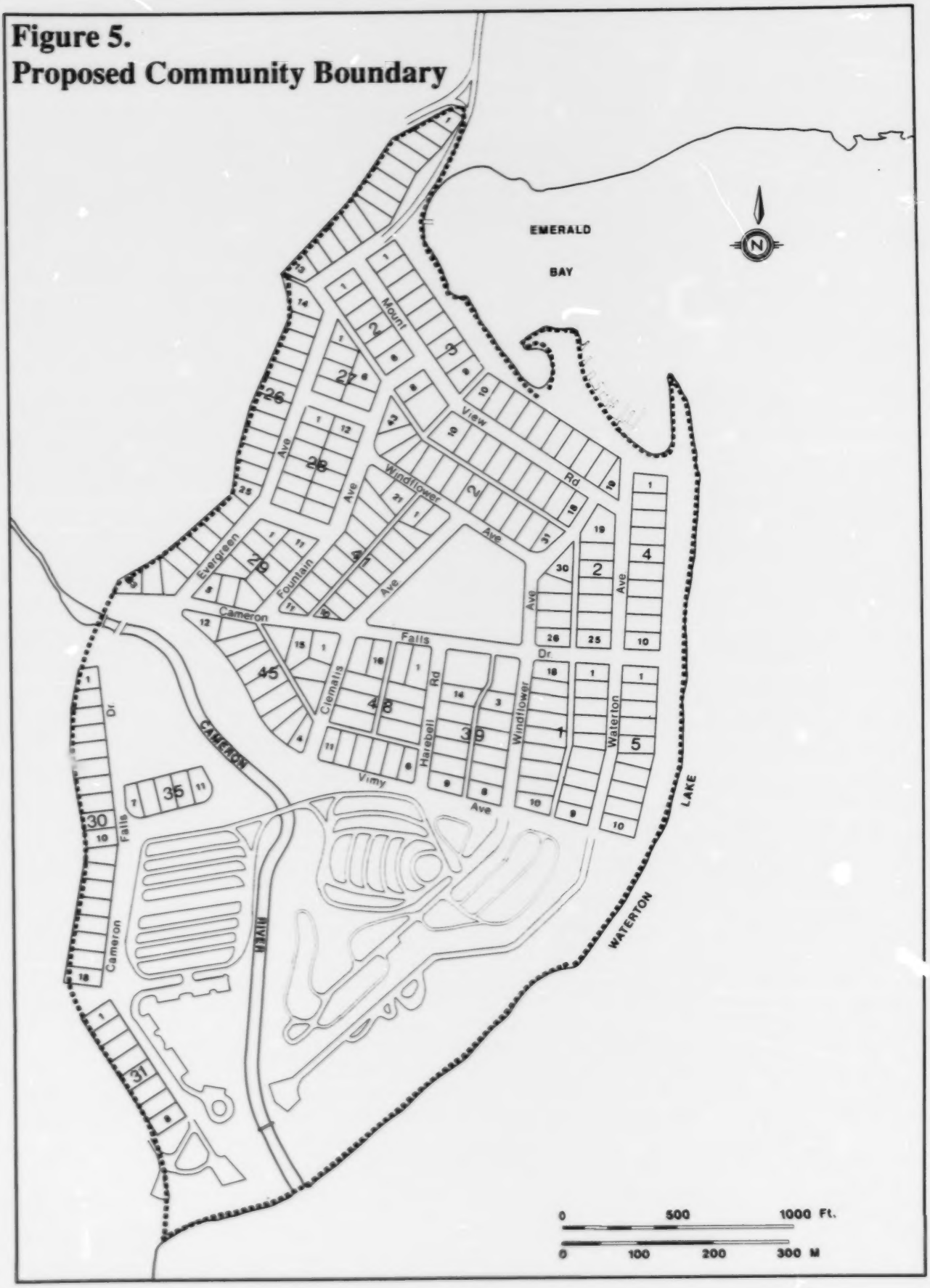
4. **To provide comfortable year-round community living for those who need to reside in the community.**

5. **To promote better utilization of the community's facilities during the shoulder season.**

6. **To provide coordinated information and interpretation services to park visitors.**

FIGURE 5

Figure 5.
Proposed Community Boundary



7. **To maintain and enhance the community's distinctive leisurely paced, small village character, and historical integrity, and to ensure that man-made developments are subordinate to the surrounding natural landscape.**

8. **To permit or encourage only those commercial uses which serve visitor needs for enjoyment of the park and basic community needs.**

9. **To provide an environment which is oriented to the pedestrian, rather than motor vehicles.**

10. **To maximize views and public access to the lakeshore.**

11. **To enhance service to the public through partnership arrangements between the public and private sectors.**

12. **To serve as a model community for the use of environmentally friendly products and practices.**

7.2 PLAN PROPOSALS

Role

* *The Community of Waterton Park will serve as:*

  - *the centre for visitor accommodation and other goods and services in the park;*
  - *the administrative and operational headquarters for Waterton Lakes National Park;*
  - *the focus for visitor information and presentation of park interpretation messages;*
  - *an attractive year-round residential community for those with a "need to reside";*
  - *a cottage community which is limited to existing leases;*
  - *a centre for the pursuit of water-based recreational activities.*

Size

* *The boundaries of the community will include the area prescribed in Figure 5.*

Density/Form/Character

* *The Community of Waterton Park will retain its low density and compact form. The community's informal, leisurely-paced, small village character will be retained. Maintenance of green spaces will be a priority.*

* *A mix of land uses will be retained in the community. In terms of new development, an emphasis will be placed on providing additional appropriately-scaled commercial and staff accommodation. Higher density commercial uses will be concentrated in a central core.*

Architectural Motif and Guidelines

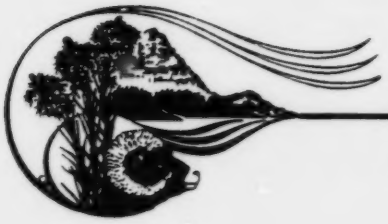
* *The 1987* Architectural Motif and Guidelines for Waterton Lakes National Park *will be rigorously applied in the review of new proposals for development and redevelopment.*

Community Plan

* *An update of the community plan will be undertaken.*

Recapitalization

* *Redevelopment of many of the elements of the community infrastructure, from street works and utilities to private facilities, will be a priority.*



8.0 ROLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR MAJOR FRONTCOUNTRY AREAS

In addition to the community of Waterton Park, three popular frontcountry areas in Waterton Lakes National Park present sufficiently complex management concerns to warrant more detailed planning, following approval of the Park Management Plan. These areas are the Prince of Wales Hill, Cameron Lake and Red Rock Canyon. Roles and objectives for each of these areas are presented below, to provide a framework for further planning and any improvements which may be necessary in the interim.

8.1 THE PRINCE OF WALES HILL

The Prince of Wales Hill Area Plan will address, in an integrated fashion, issues such as: redevelopment guidelines for the Prince of Wales Hotel; environmental impacts associated with random trail development; protection of significant cultural resources; visitor conflicts and congestion at the Emerald Bay picnic area; clearly defined trail linkages and orientation; required rehabilitation work; interpretation opportunities; the role of the Prince of Wales Hotel in serving park visitors; horse/pedestrian conflicts; and protecting the scenic integrity of the hill.

Future Role

The Prince of Wales Hill will remain a strong visual symbol of Waterton Lakes National Park, and a place to introduce many park visitors to the park's splendid vistas, and significant cultural and natural features. The area will provide a convenient escape from the urban environment of the adjacent community to pursue a wide variety of sightseeing, heritage appreciation, leisure and sports activities in a safe, relatively natural setting.

Three distinct activity nodes will serve different purposes. The Prince of Wales Hotel will continue to provide overnight accommodation and associated amenities to the public, as well as offering a dramatic scenic overview of the park. The Emerald Bay picnic area will serve as a semi-urban base for a range of sports and leisure activities. The Linnet Lake area will provide a more natural, less crowded setting for heritage appreciation activities and water-based activities.

Objectives

1. **To concentrate visitor use in the three visitor activity nodes, while clearly defining pedestrian linkages between them.**
2. **To work with the owners and management of the Prince of Wales Hotel to define suitable guidelines for future expansion or redevelopment of the hotel**
3. **To improve orientation and trail linkages between the community and the Prince of Wales Hill.**
4. **To reduce visitor impacts on the area's natural environment and improve the hill's aesthetic integrity.**
5. **To develop strategies to ensure the protection of significant archaeological and historical resources.**
6. **To miminize conflicts among different visitor groups.**
7. **To provide interpretation services which promote understanding and appreciation of the area's natural and cultural features.**

8.2 CAMERON LAKE

Further planning in the Cameron Lake area will address, in an integrated fashion, issues such as: trail orientation and linkages; protecting important grizzly bear habitat along the lakeshore and avoiding bear/human conflicts; the poor visitor experience provided at the picnic area; projected parking requirements for frontcountry and backcountry users; maximizing the area's interpretation potential; and examining the potential for additional ski trail development.

Future Role

The Cameron Lake area will be a major destination day-use area, at the terminus of the scenic Akamina Parkway. The area will provide high quality opportunities for visitors to relax and safely enjoy sightseeing, heritage appreciation and leisure activities in a quiet, scenic natural setting. The area will also serve as an important departure point for backcountry trips.

Objectives

1. **To encourage visitors to linger and enjoy the area's natural setting.**
2. **To minimize the potential for bear/human encounters.**
3. **To centralize visitor facilities and the majority of use, leaving the remainder of the area essentially free from man-made intrusions with opportunities for solitude and quiet.**
4. **To improve trail linkages and orientation.**
5. **To provide facilities and services which highlight the area's attractive natural features.**
6. **To enhance interpretation opportunities which provoke interest in and inform visitors about the area's natural environment.**

8.3 RED ROCK CANYON

Further planning in the Red Rock Canyon area will address, in an integrated fashion, issues such as: recapitalization of trails and interpretive displays; trail linkages and orientation; enhanced protection for the canyon, wildlife and cultural features in the area; public safety concerns; and conflicts between different user groups.

Future Role

The Red Rock Canyon area will be a major day-use destination providing high quality, short-term sightseeing, leisure and heritage appreciation experiences as part of the Red Rock Parkway experience. The area will provide opportunities to observe and learn about the area's natural and cultural features in a safe, convenient and low-impact manner, in addition to serving as the departure point for backcountry trips into the northwest portion of the park.

Objectives

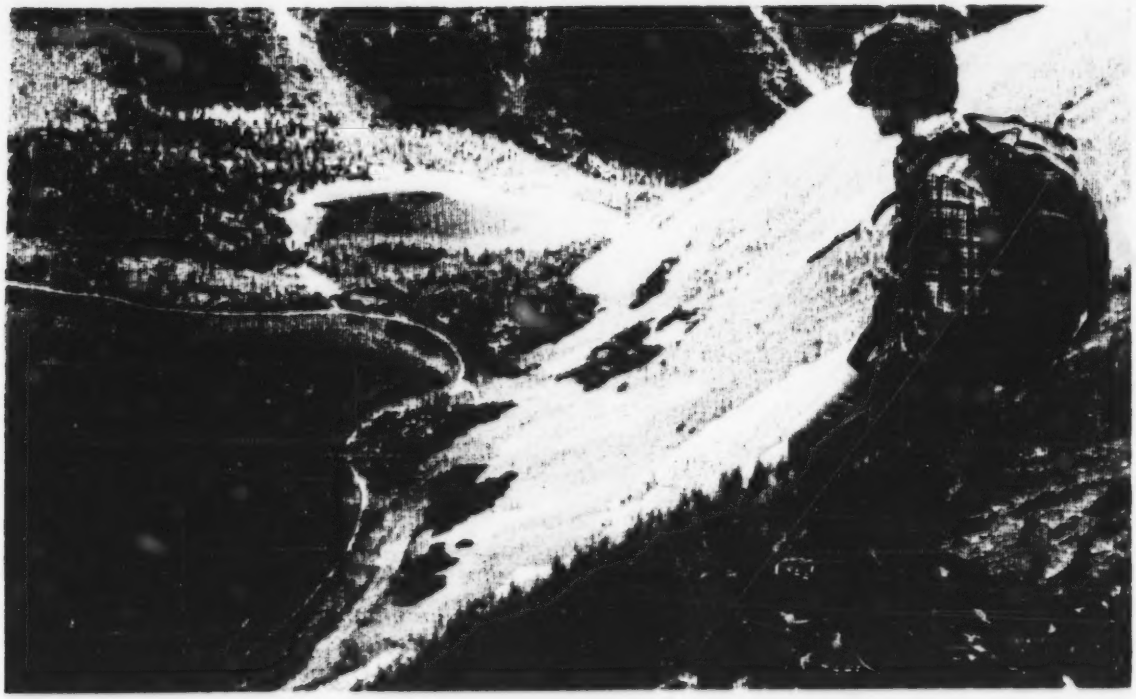
1. **To reduce visitor impacts such as accelerated erosion of the canyon walls and habituation/feeding of wildlife, and place a priority on rehabilitating or hardening disturbed areas.**

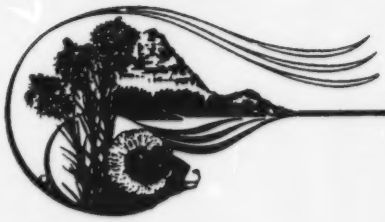
2. **To separate different user groups by providing separate areas of dispersal.**

3. **To improve orientation to frontcountry and backcountry opportunities in the area.**

4. **To provide interpretation services which promote understanding and appreciation of the area's natural and cultural features, and minimize visitor impacts to these features.**

5. **To enhance public safety in a sensitive manner which allows visitors to continue to view and appreciate the canyon.**





9.0 SUPPORT FACILITIES

Support facilities are facilities required for the operation and administration of the park. Although these facilities are generally not as visible to the public as other park facilities like campgrounds and picnic areas, they are an integral part of the park infrastructure. Important support facilities in Waterton Lakes National Park are: the maintenance compound/operations centre at the base of Crandell Mountain; the trade waste pit; the park administration building; bulk storage areas adjacent to the maintenance compound and on the Blakiston Fan; and warden stations and backcountry patrol cabins throughout the park.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **To retain essential support facilities within park boundaries, rather than impacting adjacent lands.**

2. **To minimize the negative environmental and visual impacts associated with Canadian Parks Service support facilities.**

3. **To centralize park maintenance functions.**

4. **To remove unnecessary support facilities.**

9.2 PLAN PROPOSALS

* *The current role of the maintenance compound/operations centre and bulk storage areas will not be expanded.*

* *Strategies will be developed for mitigating and managing environmental impacts associated with support facilities.*

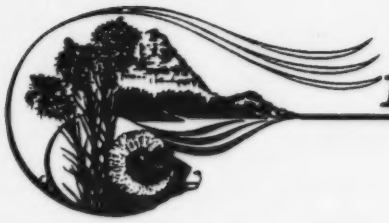
* *Immediate actions will include the removal of two staff housing units from the entrance to the operations centre and reduction of materials other than gravel stockpiles from the Blakiston Fan bulk storage area to the upper compound storage area.*

* *Access to the Blakiston Fan will be re-assessed following any flooding in the interest of reducing the length of road on the fan, and minimizing manipulation of natural water flows (see also Section 5.5 - Hydrological, Aquatic and Fisheries Resources).*

* *The recapitalization of some maintenance compound/operations centre components (e.g. tradeshop, garage, bunkhouse) will be required within the lifetime of the plan.*

* *The backcountry patrol cabin at Boundary Bay, the horse barns and corral at Crypt Landing, and the firetower cabin off Chief Mountain Highway will be removed.*

* *The Cameron Lake warden station will be removed.*



10.0 REGIONAL INTEGRATION

In 1932 Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park in Montana were dedicated as the world's first International Peace Park. This designation commemorated the peace and friendship Canada and the United states share and recognized that the political boundary separating the parks should not preclude the wise management and protection of the heritage resources the two parks contain. In 1978 when Waterton Lakes National Park was designated as a Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program, attention was again drawn to the reality that this park must be managed in a regional context.

The ecological integrity and the relevance of Waterton Lakes National Park as a key regional tourism and economic generator cannot be planned and managed in isolation of its neighbours. The park boundaries were not based on ecological parameters, so many resources (e.g. grizzly bears, elk and vegetation associations) cannot be fully protected without the co-operation of adjacent land management agencies and land owners. In addition, the park's regional tourism role as an important destination must be managed within the context of a series of regional attractions. The diversity of jurisdictions and land uses surrounding Waterton Lakes National Park make regional integration initiatives all the more challenging.

Over the years, great strides have been made toward developing co-ordinated approaches to resource management and tourism planning, as well as improving the park's relations with neighbouring land managers and land owners. Through the International Peace Park designation close relationship has been developed with Glacier National Park. Initiatives such as the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Program, the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem proposal and the Trail of the Great Bear are other examples of the enhanced profile being given to regional relationships. Recent regional planning programs such as the Municipal District of Pincher Creek General Municipal Plan and the Castle River Access Management Plan have recognized the importance of protecting the visual and ecological integrity of lands adjacent to the national park. The recent designation of the Akamina-Kishenina Provincial Recreation Area by the government of British Columbia affords protection to this important area adjacent to Waterton Lakes National Park's west boundary.

Regional integration, however, is not just ensuring that increasing development pressure in the surrounding lands does not adversely impact on the heritage resources of Waterton Lakes National Park. The park creates a number of problems for neighbouring lands. The presence of the park, for instance, generates demand for commercial and residential development adjacent to the park. Some forms of development, such as camping, may be compatible with the purpose of the park while other aspects such as strip commercial development would not be desirable. The Park's elk and bear have a significant impact on the ranchers adjacent to the park. In addition, park policies of not developing gravel sources in the park and strictly limiting the disposal of solid waste in the park causes pressure on adjacent lands.

The Canadian Parks Service is committed to enhancing regional integration initiatives over the lifetime of this Park Management Plan. In order to be successful, however, regional interests must be working toward a common goal. The Canadian Parks Service believes that sustainable development principles can provide a common framework for meeting long-term regional needs and protecting the ecological integrity of Waterton Lakes National Park. Confrontation positions or debates over specific threats must be replaced

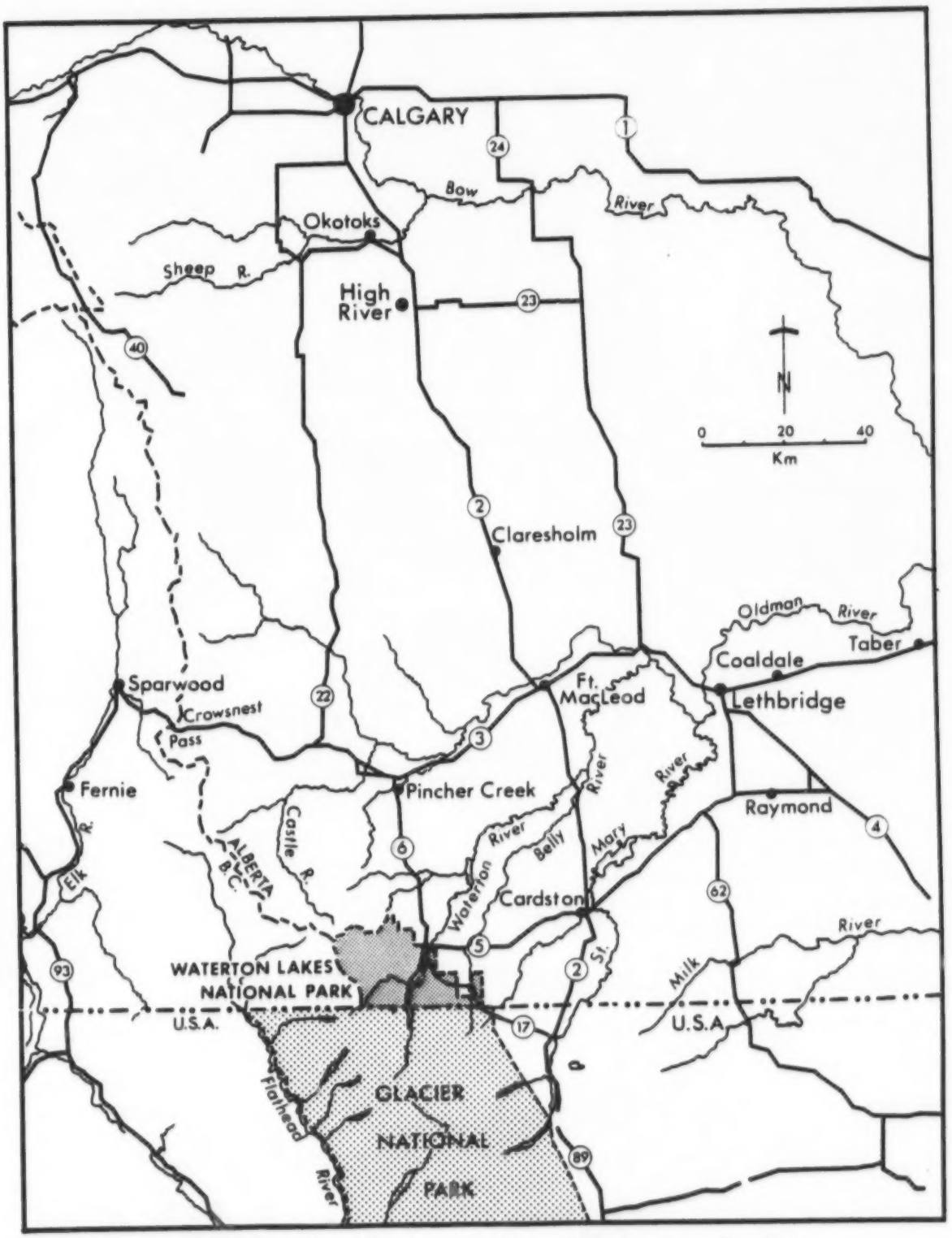


Figure 6: The Region Surrounding Waterton Lakes National Park

by a more global recognition and understanding of the requirement to achieve regional development in a manner which protects and enhances opportunities for future generations. Waterton Lakes National Park can serve as a model of sustainability, be a benchmark against which the effects of developments outside the park can be measured and play an important role as an educator and advocate for environmental stewardship.

Since regional integration is central to all aspects of park management, objectives and proposals related to this topic are provided throughout the Plan Concept. This section serves to provide a framework for regional integration as well as to summarize key proposals.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **To recognize that an outward looking, cooperative regional approach to park management is necessary to protect the park's ecological integrity.**

2. **To support the objectives of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere program and to make the International Peace Park an example to the world of how two countries can cooperate to protect shared heritage resources.**

3. **To advocate the application of sustainable development principles within the region as a means of increasing the protection of park resources while meeting the long-term needs of the region and contributing to global environmental quality.**

4. **To enhance the integration of programs for the protection and management of the park's natural and cultural resources with those of neighbouring provincial, regional and United States jurisdictions.**

5. **To provide a select range of outdoor recreational and tourism opportunities in Waterton Lakes National Park that contribute, in a coordinated fashion, to a broad spectrum of regional opportunities.**

6. **To improve effective two-way communication between the Canadian Parks Service and regional residents and land managers.**

7. **To cooperate with relevant government agencies in the planning of areas adjacent to the park, in order to ensure that Waterton Lakes National Park contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the region and that regional plans support the protection of park resources.**

8. **To enhance local and regional residents' understanding of and appreciation for the park, its purpose and objectives, and management strategies and to provide opportunities for these residents to become involved in the planning, management and operation of the park.**

10.2 PLAN PROPOSALS

* Waterton Lakes National Park will promote and enhance regional integration in the following areas:

  Resource Protection and Management - through active participation in the Biosphere Reserve program; serving as a regional ecological benchmark; cooperative research projects and management strategies with international, national, provincial and regional agencies; support for Crown of the Continent Ecosystem initiatives; development of management strategies in support of the World Wildlife Fund's Prairie Conservation Action Plan; support for the protection of Environmentally Significant Areas in the

Municipal Districts of Cardston and Pincher Creek which lie adjacent to the park; and other initiatives (see also the Section 3 - Park Purpose and Objectives Statement and Section 5 - Protecting and Managing Heritage Resources).

Tourism - by clearly defining and communicating the park's regional market position and target markets; actively participating in the development of regional tourism and marketing strategies; participation in joint marketing initiatives; participating with local business people in the development of the Waterton Community Tourism Action Plan; involvement in the Trail of the Great Bear initiative; development of coordinated reservation systems; and other initiatives (see also Section 3 - Park Purpose and Objectives Statement and Section 6 - Enhancing the Park Experience and Managing Visitor Impacts).

Communication Services and Education - through coordinated regional trip planning information distribution; interpretation exchange programs with the U.S. Parks Service and other regional agencies/education centres; an increased emphasis on outreach programs; participation in Biosphere Reserve educational initiatives; support for Waterton Natural History Association education intiatives; seeking involvement of local native groups in park interpretation programs; and other initiatives (see also Section 6.6 - Communication Services).

Recreation - by planning, marketing and delivering outdoor recreational opportunities as part of a regional spectrum.

Land Use Planning - by participating in regional land use planning initiatives; promoting sustainable development and compatible land uses on adjacent lands; and consulting with regional residents and land management agencies regarding park planning, management and operations.

Regional Economy - by providing employment opportunities for the local poopulation; continuing to serve as a key regional tourism generator; and through tourism, help contribute to regional sustainable development.

11.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The analysis of the impacts (positive and negative) of Waterton Lakes National Park Plan Concept proposals is an application of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) and the Canadian Parks Service's guidelines for socio-economic impact assessment. EARP provides a formal procedure to ensure environmentally sound planning. Its purpose is to determine, in advance, the environmental acceptability of projects under federal government control and to ensure negative environmental impacts are prevented or reduced to a minimum. Socio-economic analysis is based on the Canadian Park Service Directive 2.2.1 - Socio-Economic Analysis in Management Plans for National Parks. The analysis contained in this section of the Plan Concept summarizes the positive and negative social implications of the proposals on visitors, residents and the surrounding region.

The application of EARP and Directive 2.2.1 to the Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan Review is a multi-level process. First, baseline environmental and socio-economic information, including the impacts associated with existing park facilities and activities were identified in the report entitled Background Information Management Plan Review - Waterton Lakes National Park. Next, this baseline information was a prime consideration, along with environmental and social implications of new proposals, during planning team deliberations to develop the Plan Concept. The planning team was composed of park experts capable of defining these implications, and additional expertise was called upon as required. Proposals with obvious unacceptable impacts were rejected outright. Environmental and social analysis was, therefore, an integral part of the Plan Concept development, rather than a reactive assessment of proposals. Finally, a detailed impact assessment will be carried out prior to implementation of any proposal with potential environmental or social effects, once the scope and magnitude of development is better defined.

The discussions which follow concentrate on cumulative impacts, in addition to impacts associated with individual proposals.

11.1 PROTECTING AND MANAGING HERITAGE RESOURCES

In summary, implementation of the Plan Concept would result in positive benefits to the park's heritage resources. Noteworthy positive effects are summarized below:

- An emphasis on regional cooperation in managing natural and cultural resources will improve the ecological integrity of the park and provide a better knowledge base for management efforts.

- A more ecological approach to resource management is proposed, which recognizes the important interrelationships among natural features and processes.

- A high priority for protection will be given to sensitive, unique, rare and endangered species. Numerous areas in the park contain habitats critical to species' survival, breeding sites of rare or sensitive species, highly significant cultural resources and important habitat for grizzly bears, raptors, ungulates and others. These will be protected through appropriate zoning and other measures.

- Rehabilitation plans will be mandatory for all new developments and a systematic approach will be used to priorize and rehabilitate disturbed areas, particularly in the main Waterton Valley.

- Interference with natural processes will be reduced, notably with respect to hydrological processes on the Blakiston Fan and elsewhere.

- A systematic approach to identifying and protecting rare plant species and important vegetation associations, such as the fescue grasslands, fir-whitebark pine forests, limber pine forests and "intermediate alpine meadow associations is proposed.

- An emphasis will be placed on improving scientific knowledge about fish populations and current management techniques in support of maintaining viable native fish populations in the park.

- Cultural resources will be given a higher profile and better protection through Zone I designations, a systematic inventory, monitoring and management program, and enhanced public awareness through interpretation programs.

11.2 ENHANCING THE PARK EXPERIENCE AND MANAGING VISITOR IMPACTS

As the title of this portion of the Plan Concept suggests, the principle of managing visitor impacts on park resources was integral to all proposals for enhancing the park experience. At a broad level, impacts will be reduced through appropriate and coordinated marketing of the park so that it does not attempt to meet all the demands placed upon it. By defining a regional tourism market position and priorizing target market segments, Canadian Parks Service initiatives can be targeted toward appropriate visitor groups.

There will be some social effects resulting from this approach. Over the years, certain traditional users such as swimmers may find their needs are not being served by the Canadian Parks Service to the extent they are today. The ambience of the park will shift from that of a summer recreational resort toward a greater focus on heritage education and appreciation of park values. As a result, certain current visitors may frequent the park less. They will be replaced, however, by other visitor groups whose activities are more dependent on the national park setting. The more global benefits of the proposed park market position, in terms of enhanced support for the national park mandate and promotion of environmental stewardship principles that can be applied to everyday life, should be noted.

New facility development to meet visitor needs will be modest, and an emphasis has been placed on concentrating facilities in a few development nodes (notably the park community and along park roads). The removal of several redundant or environmentally unacceptable facilities is proposed.

More specific discussions pertaining to communication services and the various visitor activity groups is provided below.

Communication Services

All aspects of the park experience have been considered, which should result in a more comprehensive and satisfactory delivery of services. Park messages will reach a broader cross-section of the public. This will result in a greater appreciation for national park values, and a moreinformed visiting public. In addition, it is anticipated that reaching potential visitors before their trip will reduce the requirement for enforcement of regulations and visitor impact management within the park. Finally, enhanced in-park services will increase the enjoyment, safety and knowledge level of visitors. Frustrating gaps in orientation and information services will be filled, and use of park facilities and serviceswill be optimized.

A major emphasis has been placed on the use of communication services in preference to more active visitor management strategies (e.g. use limits and regulations). This generally results in a more enjoyable park experience and better compliance is achieved once the reasons behind management actions are understood.

Consolidating the park's three information outlets into a single centre within or adjacent to the community would alleviate the requirement for three individual structures to house these outlets, thereby reducing disturbances to park lands, and would be far less confusing for park visitors.

The Sightseer Group

Impacts are minimized by concentrating sightseeing activities in Zone IV and V areas along existing park roads, and by targeting communication services to this group in order to promote a better understanding and appreciation of park resources, national park values and a sense of environmental stewardship.

The proposed development of new facilities to support this group's activities is minimal, and would include additional roadside pull-offs and viewpoints and new strolling/walking trails. These must be developed in an environmentally sound manner, based on an understanding of visitor preferences. The improvement of existing trails, including extension into loop trails, would take precedence over construction of new trails.

Meeting the proposed objective of maintaining the current slow-speed, scenic character of the Akamina and Red Rock parkways, would limit potential road upgrading to accommodate large vehicles. Some visitors may, as a result, be restricted from using the parkways.

Heritage Appreciation Group

Plan proposals for this high priority visitor activity group consist primarily of enhanced communication services. Because of their comparatively high level of knowledge about park resources and support for the national park mandate, actively encouraging use by the Heritage Appreciation group is not anticipated to have adverse environmental effects. The considerable multiplier effect associated with educational programs would be an important benefit. With the proposed emphasis on partnerships, others (e.g. private interpretation guiding services, the Waterton Natural History Association, other park businesses) would be able to benefit financially from increased visitation by this group. The Canadian Parks Service could then focus its limited resources on resource management programs and directing partnership programs.

The proposal to expand the Heritage Centre within the Zone V community boundaries is not expected to have adverse environmental effects. Benefits to visitors would be numerous including a location for rainy day activities, reduced confusion regarding the roles of the three current information outlets, enhanced interpretation displays and a centralized, visible location for presenting park themes and messages.

Backcountry Enthusiasts Group

Protection of resources is a priority in Zone II - Wilderness areas, which make up the vast majority of the park's backcountry under the proposed zoning plan. Education of backcountry users with respect to low impact use is also a priority. Plan proposals are aimed at improving resource protection and visitor experiences through the definition of Limits of Acceptable Change for three different backcountry opportunity classes. The definition of opportunity classes would ensure that a broad range of desired backcountry experiences can be provided in the park, while conflicts between users with different needs are kept to a minimum. Application of the Limits of Acceptable Change concept would ensure that clearly defined criteria are used to determine acceptable levels of use and environmental

impact, and to indicate when management actions are required.

The lack of new trail development would ensure that certain park areas, particularly those which are ecologically sensitive, remain free from human disturbances.

The proposed recapitalization program for backcountry campgrounds is aimed at addressing some longstanding environmental concerns and at providing a more appropriate range of backcountry camping opportunities in the park. Removal of the Rowe Meadow campground would provide greater protection for grizzly bears in this important habitat, reduce bear/human conflicts, improve the aesthetics of this open natural area and reduce impacts to the fragile meadow vegetation. Optional means of reducing the environmental impact associated with the Crypt Lake campground are presented in the Plan Concept. Public input is required to determine which option would be most acceptable to area users.

The cook shelters currently scattered throughout the backcountry are not deemed to be consistent the level of resource protection required on Zone II - Wilderness lands. The shelters tend to promote high levels of impact through littering, tree cutting and vegetation trampling, and represent man-made intrusions that are not compatible with a wilderness experience. In addition, they require a considerable amount of upkeep on the part of the Canadian Parks Service. Modern camping technology reduces the need for such shelters. Shelters will be retained in select Zone III - Natural Environment areas to ensure the safety and enhance the enjoyment of less experienced backcountry users.

The proposal to eliminate open fires in some parts of the backcountry will reduce concerns such as tree cutting and the proliferation of fire rings, in addition to reducing park operational costs. This is particularly important in alpine or subalpine areas where there is little or no deadfall in the vicinity. For many people, an open fire is an integral part of the backcountry experience, so this proposal may have an adverse social effect for some users.

Plan proposals attempt to address environmental concerns and visitor conflicts associated with horse use by placing some restrictions on horse use and increasing the separation between horse riders and hikers. Limits on resident and non-resident outfitters would reduce the number of horses in the backcountry, as would the proposed summer season restrictions on the Crypt and Bertha Lake trails. The option of establishing a semi-permanent outfitter camp in the vicinity of the Snowshoe warden cabin would concentrate overnight horse use to a more durable area than the currently used campgrounds in fragile alpine and subalpine locations, and provide a better visitor experience for both horse users and hikers.

The group size restriction on horse parties would address adverse environmental and social impacts associated with large parties. The proposals for horse use would limit some opportunities for backcountry users while enhancing the overall backcountry experience. The viability of the park's resident commercial outfitter would be improved.

Trail bicycling is to be limited to trails which meet the criteria outlined in Directive WRD61. These criteria were established to minimize the environmental and social impacts associated with trail bicycling. It is anticipated that the proposed routes would provide superior trail bicycling opportunities in the park, within acceptable environmental and visitor use limits. Provision of an opportunity departing from the community was a priority for the public, and will be met through the designation of the Crandell loop for bicycling. Increased potential for bear/human conflicts can be anticipated with the designation of the old Y camp road as a bicycle route. If these concerns cannot be addressed through seasonal closures, this designation should be re-considered.

The Leisure Group

Fostering a greater sense of environmental stewardship and support for national park values is an primary objective of communication services for this group, in addition to ensuring that visitors arrive with realistic expectations of what the park has to offer.

Because of the small size of the park, the limited suitable terrain and the abundance of camping opportunities just outside the park, the Plan Concept proposes that new campground development be limited to infilling within existing campgrounds. This would avoid the disturbance of new lands, but there would continue to be an unmet demand for campsites within the park. This would disappoint visitors who do not wish to camp outside park boundaries. The establishment of a campground reservation system is essential to minimizing visitor dissatisfaction and to allowing travellers to make plans in advance. Roles have been established for each campground and upgrading to provide quality camping experiences which are consistent with these roles is proposed.

One of the major impacts associated with existing campgrounds is wildlife habituation. Direction for addressing this problem is provided in Section 5 - Protecting and Managing Heritage Resources. Artificial containment of Cameron Creek will continue to be necessary to protect the Townsite campground.

A study to better understand the needs of picnickers is proposed, with improvements to park facilities to follow. This should result in better park picnicking experiences.

There has been considerable debate about the acceptable level of impact associated with commercial trail rides on the Blakiston Fan and golf course vicinity. Standards for trail impacts must be clearly defined in consultation with the operator, as proposed in the Plan Concept, and a monitoring/rehabilitation program established in order to increase the objectivity of impact assessments while maintaining a quality trail riding experience.

Any efforts to privatize the swimming pool must consider the needs of local residents as well as visitors, since the pool serves as an important recreational amenity for the region. Closure of the facility, should a private operator not be found, would reduce park operational requirements but a highly valued recreational resource would be lost.

The Challenge Seeker Group

The small size of this low priority visitor activity group and the nature of their activities mean that associated impacts are low. The park does not play an important role in providing opportunities for this group. Plan proposals address information needs in particular. No new facility development is proposed specifically for this group.

The Package Group

The impact of this low priority visitor activity group can be high because of the orientation toward facilities and services, the large size of groups and the generally low level of awareness of the effects of their activities. There is also considerable potential for large groups to adversely affect other visitors' park experiences. Communication services will be directed toward increasing understanding of and support for national park values, as well as minimizing the impact of groups on park resources.

Bus tour activities will be concentrated in the main Waterton Valley, where suitable opportunities are present. This will contain associated impacts and development to a limited area, enable the Canadian Parks Service to better target the delivery of park messages, and reduce pres-

sures to upgrade the parkways to the extent that their present character would be compromised. Development within the community to accommodate bus tours has the potential to negatively affect the desired community character. Care must be taken to avoid such impacts through architectural controls. Within the proposed direction, the park would not develop into a major tour bus destination, but would remain an interesting stopover.

The proposal to redevelop the group camp so it handles more, smaller groups will lead to more effective use of the existing site.

Each of the four options for the youth camps attempts to address associated environmental impacts through different means. The appropriateness of these facilities in a national park is questionable. Public comment is require to determine which of the options is most acceptable from a social perspective.

The Sports Enthusiasts Group

The private sector will play a major role in meeting the needs of this group. The Canadian Parks Service will continue to provide communication services, however, in order to build support for national park values among this group and to minimize the impacts of sport activities on park resources. Despite the low priority of this group, it is anticipated that demand for sport activities in the park will continue to be relatively high. Some visitors would find that their needs are not being adequately met and would seek better opportunities elsewhere in the region.

Enhanced restrictions on motor boating, such as no overnight use, will further reduce negative impacts associated with this activity. The proposed ban on motor boats in Emerald Bay would minimize hazards and conflicts among different user groups in this congested area.

Operation of the marina is not central to the Canadian Parks Service mandate. Retaining a high quality service to the public must remain a high priority if privatisation proceeds.

The quality of the golfing experience would be improved by giving an operator adequate tenure through a lease agreement to warrant much needed capital improvements. The development of commercial accommodation in this location is not warranted given the low priority of this visitor activity group, the proximity of the other commercial accommodation, and the unacceptable impact on park resources.

Impacts associated with nordic skiing are negligible. A major initiative to provide nordic skiing opportunities in the park is not warranted, however, given the often marginal snow conditions. Efforts are being concentrated in the best locations from a skier's perspective, and to minimize operational costs.

11.3 THE COMMUNITY CONCEPT

Definition of the community boundary as proposed in the Plan Concept, and the maintenance of a low density, compact form would place clear limits on the expansion of community facilities and services. Strong public support has been expressed for maintaining the informal, leisurely paced, small village character of the community. The Architectural Motif and Guidelines provide considerable guidance with respect to desirable elements of the community's character and maintaining aesthetic quality. The Plan Concept provides guidelines for the upcoming Community Plan Review, which will address the social and environmental implications of the community of Waterton Park in detail.

11.4 MAJOR FRONTCOUNTRY AREAS

Completion of area plans for the Prince of Wales Hill, Cameron Lake and Red Rock Canyon would permit detailed examination of the complex social and environmental issues associated with each area.

11.5 SUPPORT FACILITIES

The ability of the Canadian Parks Service to address environmental impacts associated with support facilities is severely impeded by high costs associated with relocation and a lack of viable options for several essential facilities. Nonetheless, a number of proposals are aimed at mitigating unacceptable impacts. These include: the removal of several redundant warden patrol cabins and staff housing units; the call for a strategy to mitigate and manage impacts associated with the operations centre/maintenance compound; and the reduction of materials and roads on the Blakiston Fan storage area. Remaining facilities will continue to have negative visual and environmental effects.